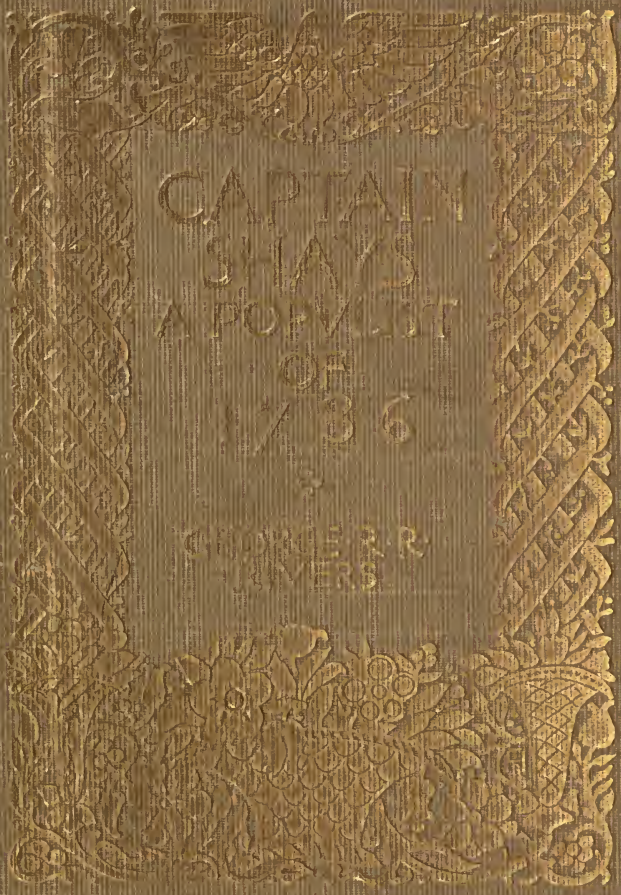
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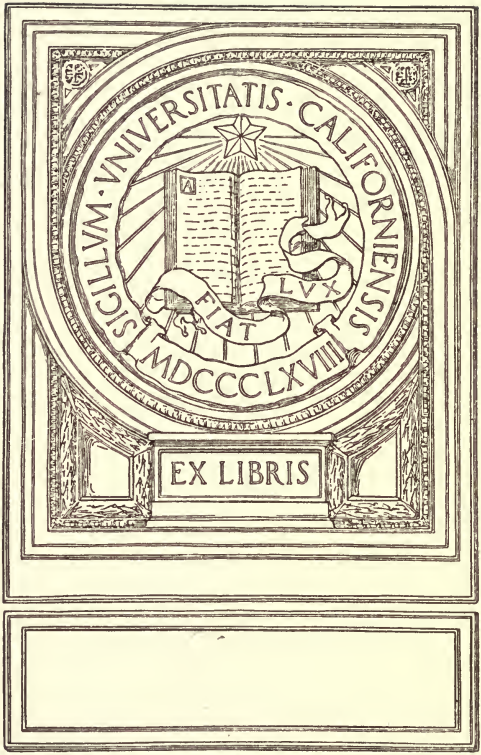
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CAPTAIN SHAYS.

"My name is Shays,
In former days
In Pelham I did dwell, sir;
I was obliged to quit that place
Because I did rebel, sir."

CAPTAIN SHAYS

A·POPVLIST·OF·1786

BY·GEORGE·R·R·RIVERS

AVTHOR
OF
"THE·GOVERNOR'S GARDEN"

BOSTON·LITTLE·BROWN·AND·CO
M·D·CCC·XCVII

Copyright, 1897,

By George R. R. Rivers.

University Press:

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1897
MAIN

TO THE PRESENT OWNERS OF THE OLD FARM IN
PETERSHAM, WHERE MANY OF THE SCENES
OF THIS STORY ARE ENACTED,

I Dedicate this Little Book.

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PREFACE.

THERE is nothing new under the sun. During the past few years our country has been in the throes of an agrarian and financial agitation; and there are many among us who think that this condition of affairs is something new, that we have a new problem to solve. This is far from being the case. We have but to turn to the pages of the histories of the United States dealing with the period directly succeeding the Revolution to learn that the first troubles that confronted government were much the same as those that confront it now. From the close of the Revolution until 1787–88 the agricultural classes, especially in New England, were in very much the same frame of mind as that in which we find the farmers of the Western States to-day. Their farms were heavily mortgaged; they

were deeply in debt; and they had the same real and imaginary grievances that we hear about now. Whether there was any cause for this discontent it is not necessary to decide; but that it existed in 1786, and has again appeared in 1896, there is not the slightest doubt. In each case the results have been much the same. The aggrieved have arrayed themselves against the aggressors, and, led by demagogues, who set the masses against the classes, have lost sight of the real evil and the true remedy in their desire to punish those whom they blame for all their misfortunes.

It cannot be denied that in 1786 there was much distress among the farmers of Massachusetts and other New England States, and that in a large degree they were justified in their feelings toward government and the rich merchants of Boston and Salem. But it must be said in fairness to the latter that they did all in their power to make matters easier; and had it not been for the evil and selfish leadership of Daniel Shays and his lieutenants, much suffering might have been prevented. So to-

day no one will assert that there is no cause for the complaints of the farmers of the Western States, and we cannot blame them if they feel that their trials are due in a measure to the inactiveness of government and those men whom they consider the plutocrats of the seaboard towns; but now, as one hundred and ten years ago, they exaggerate their grievances, and seek the wrong remedy. The spirit of Daniel Shays still lives in the hearts of some of those leaders who are showing the farmers the wrong path, and who have nothing in view but their own selfish ends.

The case of 1786 is so similar to that of 1896 that this little story of Shays' Rebellion may be of interest to some of its readers. I have endeavored throughout to maintain historical accuracy; and this may make the book of some value, even though the narrative be dull.

GEORGE R. R. RIVERS.

MILTON, March 13, 1897.

CAPTAIN SHAYS.

CHAPTER I.

DEACON BROWN, the blacksmith, was standing by the forge holding a horseshoe between the pincers in his left hand, while with his right he raised the hammer, but paused before he struck, and looked over his shoulder toward the youth who was blowing the bellows in a heedless, careless manner. The young man did not notice him, but stood peering out of the little window toward the long row of maples that lined the narrow roadway leading to the house, a few hundred rods distant beyond the pasture.

"What's ailing ye to-day, Jimmy?" said the blacksmith, still holding the hammer aloft. "Ye don't give us enough wind to blow the dust off of a fly's back, and ye 're standing there star-gazing with your mouth wide open. Put some life into it, boy, or I sha'n't get this mare shod in a week,

and that pretty gentleman will be back after her in a half hour. What are ye thinking about, anyway?"

"Nothing in particular," answered the young man, rousing himself suddenly, and beginning to pump vigorously at the bellows.

"That's what I should say, 'nothing in particular.' Just wake up and think of what ye're doing, for I'm going to charge a shilling extra for a duty on them silver buckles he's wearing. They can't keep on bleeding us and we get nothing in return, — no money, no victuals, no nothing; only work at the forge and on the farm all day through the year for the sake of seeing these city dandies in their velvet breeches and silver buckles. That's better. Ye're putting a little more muscle into it now."

The bare sinewy arm brought down the hammer, and then neither spoke again for some moments. When the shoe was finished, Deacon Brown threw it into the bucket of water by his side, and going to the open door looked out across the road and fields toward the hills beyond the tannery.

Deacon Isaac Brown was of old New England stock, and his grandfather had settled in Nichewaug long before Petersham had become a town, and

when remnants of the old native tribe still roamed about the hills and through the valleys.

Deacon Isaac himself was born in Nichewaug, and was now fifty-two years old. He was a large, muscular man, with red hair and bristling beard streaked with gray, and red-brown eyes shadowed by grisly brows, between which were deep furrows. His face was hard, but it was honest. He wiped the sweat from it with his bare arm, passed his fingers through his beard and hair, drew a long breath, and then turned back into the shop, and going to the mare's head, tightened the hitch-rope, and called his son.

"Get her off hind foot betwixt your legs, Jimmy, and mind she don't kick ye, for by the looks of her eye she's an ugly brute. There."

Jimmy got under the mare's belly and soon held her foot securely. When the shoe was set, the blacksmith threw down his hammer and went to the door again.

"Jest in time," he said, looking back at his son. "He's coming down the hill, and I guess he's been to the tavern."

"No, he ain't," answered his son, coming up to the door. "I saw him talking to Ruth up by the barn. That's what I was looking at when you called me."

"The devil he was, the impudent coxcomb," said the blacksmith, the furrow between his brows deepening. "I guess I 'll choose the company my daughter keeps. What is he, anyway, d' ye think? He looks to me like one of them Britishers."

"And to me, too, father. He 's almost here now, so we 'd better not be staring at him."

The man walked briskly up to the door of the shop, tapping his boot with his riding-whip as an accompaniment to a song he was humming. He was perhaps twenty-five years old, with black hair and eyes, and a handsome face with a pleasant smile. He wore a brown velvet coat and breeches, fastened at the knees with silver buckles; high boots, and a sugar loaf beaver hat. He bowed and raised his whip to his hat as he entered the smithy.

"Ah! she 's ready," he said as he went up to the mare and patted her on the neck. "I 'm obliged to you, sir, for being so prompt. How much do I owe you? Is that all? I must hurry on, for I 've already lost an hour, and I must get to Worcester to-night."

"You 've a long ride, sir," said Brown, "but I guess she 'll carry ye there all right. May I ask where ye came from?"

"From Springfield. There are great times in

Springfield now. The troops are gathered there, and they expect trouble. Good-day, sir. I 'll be passing by this way again before long, and I 'll call on you." He vaulted into the saddle, and was soon disappearing round the corner of the hill towards Barre.

"He is n't so bad after all," said Brown to his son, as he watched the stranger passing over the ledge under the elms. "I don't believe there 's much to him one way or another. Some college-bred boy who don't know no better. Put the tools together, Jimmy, and come home to dinner. The horn 's blowing."

Instead of going round the steep curve and up the lane, the two men strolled leisurely over the rolling field until they reached the stone wall, which they climbed at a point just opposite the house. It was a plain two-story New England house with a long shed in its rear, used as a barn and dairy, although there was a larger barn across the road in the field. The blacksmith and his son passed through the shed into the kitchen, and were met by Ruth, a bright, pretty girl of eighteen, with auburn hair, and a fair, rosy complexion. The two men washed at the sink, and then sat down to dinner.

"Ruth," said her father, "so ye 've had a

pleasant talk with our young friend whose mare cast a shoe. I hope he was civil. I don't like to have every young popinjay who goes by here make too free with ye. But I guess he 's harmless. What did he say?"

"Not much, father," said Ruth, with a laugh. "He took off his hat and said it was a fine day and asked me if I liked cows. I told him I did, and then he wanted to know if I could tell him who the blacksmith was. I did n't find that very hard to answer, and so he said good-day and lifted his hat again. He was a very good-looking young man, though, but I guess I can get along without him," and she laughed again.

"Well, there 's one good thing about him, anyway," said Brown, putting his hand in his pocket and drawing out three silver shillings. "He give me these, and I 'll wager my last cow there ain't the match of 'em in Petersham. Them 's British, Ruth, but they 're worth more than a peck of potatoes, and that 's what Joe Reed pays me in. It 's all very well for the like of this stripling to have all the silver he wants; buckles and money too, but how about we poor folks who do the work? There 's got to be a change, and there are signs of it already. If one revolution ain't enough, why, then we 'll have another."

"Don't ye think things will take care of themselves, father, if we only give 'em time?" said his son. "I can remember when you came home from the war, and I don't want to see any more of it. Seems to me that fighting would be worse than what we 're going through now."

"It 's pretty bad, that 's a fact," answered the blacksmith, raising his hand and passing his fingers over the scar on the back of his head. "But we must have money, and work, and a chance to live. Look at this young fellow who was here to-day! He has plenty. Where does he get it? What right has he to it any more 'n we have? God did n't put one man into the world to have everything, and another one to starve. I tell ye, Jimmy, there 's something wrong somewhere, and I guess I know where it is."

"What is it, father?" asked Ruth, putting on the pancake which she had just prepared.

"It 's this. Some twenty years ago this great country was being trodden under foot by the British, and finally got sick of it, and threw 'em overboard. All of us j'ined in and did our part. We fought for our country, and would do it again; but what has happened now? Instead of giving us poor folks an equal chance, they put everything into the hands of the lawyers and the courts, and

those blood-sucking merchants in Boston. I tell ye both, the time 's coming when the New England country folks will have something to say. They 're having meetings now, and I guess they mean to improve things a little. But all the same I 've got that tire to put on Bill Sear's chaise, so we 'll be going down to the shop, Jimmy. If any more of them dandies come along this way, Ruth, send 'em down to me. I 'll make love to 'em for ye."

He picked up his hat, and with a laugh walked back to the forge, followed by Jimmy. Ruth watched them a moment, then went back into the kitchen, washed the dishes, and cleared up the room. After she had finished her work she walked through the front hall out onto the stoop, which was covered by a trellis, over which grew red honeysuckle, and thence down the stone steps into the garden. It was late in August, and there were but few of the most brilliant flowers in bloom; but Ruth gathered such as she could find, and took them back to the house. Before she went in, however, she strolled across the lane to the stone wall leading to the rear of the barn, and stood a moment looking over the valley toward the hill, beyond which, about two miles distant, rose the white steeple of the village church. Then she ran in through the shed and kitchen to the

little front parlor and put her flowers in the china vase on the mantel. It was a Saturday afternoon, and she felt sure that some one would call that evening after the day's work was over. She stood a moment before the mirror in the gilt frame, and looked first at the picture of the ships painted at its top, then at the picture of herself reflected in the glass below. She laughed, and ran back to the mantel and chose a marigold from the nosegay, and returning to the mirror put the flower in her hair. Then she went to the side door and looked up and down the lane, and finally with a skip and a jump she passed through the hall and up the stairs to her room.

It was five o'clock when Deacon Brown and Jimmy returned for their supper, and found Ruth in her best frock frying pancakes. The blacksmith stopped short and laughed.

"Them girls," he said, examining his daughter with evident pride. "That 's jest the way your mother used to do when I was courting her. Did n't think of anything but fixing herself up, and setting in the parlor Saturday nights. But it 's all right," he went on, noticing the little motion of annoyance, and the blush on Ruth's cheek. "Abe 's a good boy, Ruth, and if he ever gets round to asking ye—"

Ruth ran to him and put her hand over his mouth.

"Now you keep quiet, father, and don't tease me any more about Abe. You know as well as I do that he only comes here because it's the nearest house, and we have always been together. He is n't any more to me than lots of others."

"Ain't he though!" said her father, looking at her with feigned surprise. "Well, I never. The belle of Petersham, Jimmy! Well, if he ain't much to you, ye are seemingly something to him, for he don't go nowheres else of a Saturday night. Perhaps he ain't very strong, and can't walk far," and he began to laugh. Then he went on: "Sit down, girl, and eat your supper. I 'm only chaffing ye. Jimmy, go out and milk, and leave Ruth alone."

"I ain't said nothing to her, father," said Jimmy, rising and going toward the door.

"I know ye ain't, but ye looked as if ye were going to, and I don't want the girl bothered."

With this consistent remark, Deacon Brown got up, and went into the shed. After he was gone, Ruth looked out of the window through the orchard to the grove. Then she washed her dishes again, and when all was done, ran out to the stone wall and stood gazing down the lane between the maples.

"He said he was coming back this way," she said to herself, "but perhaps he did n't mean to-day. I suppose I 'll have to go and sit up for Abe. Poor Abe, he 's a nice boy, but he is n't anything special to me. There 's Tom Hall and Sam Barnes. They 'd come just as often if they lived as near. Father seems to have set his heart on Abe, though, but I don't want him."

CHAPTER II.

THE young man who had had his mare shod by Deacon Brown rode along over the Barre road humming, singing, and whistling. As he reached the level stretch through the pines, he broke out into a song which he had been trying to catch for some time.

"Now I 've got it," he said, throwing back his head, and opening his mouth: —

> "'The dairy-maid was shy, she said,
> And did n't want to kiss me,
> But when I 'm gone, she 'll be forlorn,
> And I am sure she 'll miss me.'

"That 's it," he mused. "I remember we used to sing it at college, and that red-headed girl made me think of it. She was mighty pretty, though, and I don't like to think of that shaggy-bearded old pirate being her father, but I suppose she can't help that," and he burst out into a loud laugh that rang through the trees.

"I believe the old monster thought I was mak-

ing love to her. Well, I don't know that I 'd be to blame much if I did, but I did n't." He rode on quietly for a while, and then said half aloud:

"Get up, Molly, we 've got to be in Boston by to-morrow night, for there 's work for me to do. We could n't get a hearing in Springfield, and I don't believe we can in Worcester either. Dan Shays seems to be getting the best of things out west. How the farmers are grumbling! I don't blame 'em much, and they 're having a hard time of it. But they seem to think that we 're the cause of all the trouble. Well, what 's the use in worrying? I 'm enjoying my ride, and here 's Barre."

As he rode up to the inn where he had decided to rest and dine, he noticed that the triangular village green was crowded with people. A man was standing on a barrel in their midst, his coat and hat lying beside him, haranguing them violently. The young man threw the bridle to a hostler, and walked out to the edge of the crowd to hear what the man was saying. He caught the following, which caused a murmur of approval.

"Fellow-countrymen, we 've got rid of the French and British, but we *ain't* got rid of the lawyers and judges. Shall we be robbed by them? Shall we be skinned by the rich folks in Boston and Salem?

Shall we allow them leeches to suck our life's blood from us, and never say a word? Never! That 's what I say, never! Dan Shays, God bless him, is in Springfield with six hundred men, and he 'll fight for our rights, and break up that murdering court that 's setting there. Jine me, friends. Form a company to help Daniel! "

" Pay me for them apples, Jim, and I 'll jine ye," said a voice from the crowd.

" Who 's that speaking? You, Si Fletcher? Take him out of this meeting. Do ye think, Silas, that ye can change the feelings of these here people by such talk? It 's the fellows like you that is making all the trouble. Listen a minute. How can we pay without money, and how can we get money unless the government gives us some? Ye 've got a mortgage on your farm, ain't ye, Silas? When ye 've paid that, I 'll pay for them apples."

There was a shout of laughter from the crowd, and Fletcher retired without answering. William Perry (for that was the young man's name), watched the proceedings with much interest. The man on the barrel continued his oration, when suddenly he stopped and pointed straight at Perry.

" Look at his finery! Velvet and silver! That 's

the kind of stuff they send us, don't they? What are ye doing here?"

"I 'm listening to you, if you want to know," said William. "I presume you 're speaking for the benefit of the people."

"Do ye call yeself one of the people? Well! Well! I never. The people don't wear that kind of clothes."

"Well, I do if I want to," answered Perry, fearlessly, "and it 'll take a bigger man than you are to take 'em off of me. Just jump down off that barrel, you big wind-bag, and try it yourself."

"Keep quiet, Jim, and leave the young man alone," called some one from the crowd. "He ain't doin' no harm. Perhaps he 's friendly to us, and if he is ye 're only changing him about. Where do ye come from, young man?"

"I 've just come from Springfield, and I 'm going to Worcester. Anything else you want to know? No? Then I 'll go in and get my dinner, and if that old pair of bellows is out of wind when I 'm done, I 'm at his service; if not, I 'll move on toward Princeton."

He touched his hat with his whip, and pushing his way off the green, went into the inn and ordered dinner. This finished, he mounted his mare and descended toward Princeton.

"A nice pack of ruffians, to be sure," he thought as he rode along. "Calling on Dan Shays as if he was the Saviour. What 's he but a gaolbird, anyway? Holloa! who 's this coming up the road?" He pulled rein, and sat staring at a group of about a dozen horsemen galloping toward him.

"I 'll get one side, or they 'll run me down," he thought, suiting the action to the word. Just then they rode by him. "That 's Daniel Shays." He turned in his saddle and looked after the men. "Ha! Ha! They 're stopping."

He was right. The leader had caught sight of the young man as he passed him, and had immediately given the order to halt. Then the men wheeled about and came up to him, and Shays spoke: —

"Ain't you the young chap that plead that case in Springfield about two weeks before we shut up their shop for 'em?" he said, eying Perry closely.

"I would n't be surprised if I were he," answered the young man, carelessly. "And are n't you Captain Daniel Shays of the Continental army, who tried to prevent me from speaking?"

"Yes, sir, and I 'll prevent you and all like you, every time you open your mouth. What do you mean, sir, pleading for them money-lenders and

thieves? Don't you know, sir, that there 's a change going on here, and that all the courts are closed, and that I 'm on my way to Springfield?"

"You 'll find some friends to your taste up in Barre, Captain Shays," said Perry, with a laugh. "Do you really mean to tell me that you expect to prevent the law from taking its course? Don't you expect any one to pay his debts?"

"No, I don't, not so long as we have n't any money to pay 'em with and nothing to say about the law. Where 're you going now? Down to Worcester, I suppose," and he began to laugh disagreeably. "Well, go ahead, we won't stop you. Our men have got Worcester, and if you get into it you 'll have a lively time. I 'm going to Springfield, and while I sweep east, the men in Worcester will sweep west, and we 'll meet somewhere round here. Good-day, Mr. Lawyer. You can thank your stars that you 've got off with your good clothes and silver buckles. I advise you to make a change before you reach Worcester, for I sha'n't be there to keep 'em straight, and they 'll be likely to make you pay toll." He laughed again as before, and a moment later was galloping away over the road with his companions. Perry followed him with his eyes for a moment, then turned and resumed his journey.

"I 'm not afraid of the whole gang," he thought as he rode along, "but I 'm not sure that his advice is n't good. It is evident that this costume is conspicuous, though I can't see why it should be. When I get to Princeton I 'll see if I can get something different, and I can do this up and strap it behind the saddle. I might give up going to Worcester, but I 'd like to see whether Shays 's lying or not. I must be at the meeting in Boston to-morrow night, no matter what happens."

It was about four o'clock when he reached Princeton, and decided to rest for an hour. Much to his surprise the town was very quiet, and upon inquiry he found that the body of men he had met had not passed through it. When he asked for a suit of clothes the storekeeper looked at him in amazement, evidently being of the opinion that those he had on were good enough for any one. But he was soon persuaded that they were too good for a "rough ride," and when he saw his pay in silver, was convinced that it would have been a great mistake in the young gentleman not to have bought them. Perry returned to the inn and changed his clothes, and when, a little later, he rode out of the town, even Daniel Shays himself could have found no fault with him. So he went on humming and whistling, until as the

sun was setting he could see the spires of Worcester in the distance.

As he drew nearer the town he noticed a rumbling sound, and he stopped a moment to listen. Finally he made out the shouts and yells of the people, and decided that Shays had not deceived him. It was dark when he entered the town, and knowing it well, he rode through the unfrequented streets and pulled up before a small inn.

"Good-evening, mine host," he said as he dismounted. "You seem quiet enough here. What 's going on on the other side of the town? It sounds like a fire."

"It 's the rioters, sir. They 've been down here and had their fill, and now they 're up at the other end. Shays was here this morning and tried to stop 'em, but it was no use. They 're in for a row, and they 're going to have it. Yes, sir, I 'll give you a room, but I can't vouch for your sleeping well to-night."

"I can sleep through almost anything," answered Perry, with a laugh. "If they don't pull me out of bed or burn the house down I 'll risk it. Give me some supper, and have the mare well rubbed down and her feet washed."

"It looks as if the mob was leaving town, sir. I guess they 'll move on before morning. These

are disagreeable times, and there 's no doubt a deal of suffering, but these disturbances don't help any."

"Indeed they don't, but the people are desperate. Their farms are mortgaged, and they can pay neither interest nor principal. There is no market for their goods, and there is very little money to pay in even if a market be found. Has there been much damage done here?"

"No, sir. Only one barn burned outside the town. It is n't the farmers and poor people who 're causing these disturbances. It 's the roughs and highwaymen. Some of these fellows have broken gaol and they are a drunken, villanous lot. They have n't troubled me much, though, but I can't tell when they 'll turn up here. Half a dozen of 'em came into the tap-room this afternoon, and I gave 'em something and then got rid of them. But if something is n't done before long there 'll be trouble. Shays threatens to burn every town in the State if the General Court don't listen to him. I 'll have to shut up my house if matters don't mend, but I can't see that I 'd gain anything by destroying other people's property, and obstructing the law."

"Now that you have spoken as you have," said young Perry, smiling pleasantly, "I don't mind tell-

ing you that I have just been to Springfield on business connected with the court there. I am now on my way back to Boston, and to-morrow night I attend a meeting where it will be settled just what is to be done. Everything seems quiet in the streets again, so I 'll go to bed. Call me at six and have breakfast ready, for I 've got more than forty miles to ride. Good-night."

The host lighted him to his room, and the next morning he started for Boston.

CHAPTER III.

OF the many beautiful spots in Massachusetts, none is more charming in the month of August than the little hillside town of Petersham, perched far above the surrounding country on the ridge of a rolling ledge. It is then that its fields are bright with the waving golden-rod; its brooks and gurgling streams radiant with the brilliant flaming cardinal; its groves and pastures sweet and green with ferns of every shade, running blackberry, and high bush blueberry; its ponds dotted with the white lily. Then the cooling winds pass over it from the mountains to the north, or from the broad Atlantic to the east, unobstructed and unpolluted by the stifling breath of the valleys far below.

To New England folk all the land seems beautiful, even though they may suffer from the rigors of its variable climate. But on a scorching day in August, when the lowlands gasp under the torrid

sun, this little town breathes the sweet, fresh, autumn-like air, and sighs for her poor sisters, as she looks down on them in pity.

It was on such a day as this, more than a century ago, that Ruth Brown stood on a high point of land, looking toward Monadnock mountain. She could see through the dim haze the profile of the mountains to the north, and the summit of Wachusett to the east. Through the tree-tops toward the southwest rose the white spire of the meeting-house, and below her were the roofs and gables of two or three houses, with their barns near by; the cattle browsing on the hillsides; the sheep roaming over the pastures. All else about was shut in by a dense mass of pine, hemlock, and maple, with here and there a grove of shagbarks, or a clump of oaks.

Ruth looked toward the mountains and sighed. Then she picked up her basket and started down the hill toward the farm. It was early in the afternoon, and she had been gathering wild flowers and blueberries. Just before she came in sight of the house over the brow of the hill she thought she saw a group of men on horseback, by the shed, and as she drew near she recognized her father standing by them and talking earnestly.

"If father's got all those horses to shoe it's a

good day's work," she thought. "But they won't pay in silver as that young gentleman did. What's the matter with father lately? He's worried about something, and I'll find out what it is."

Neither her father nor the men noticed her as she passed through the shed into the kitchen, but kept on in their conversation. Deacon Brown was bare-headed and without coat, and his hair, beard, and face seemed all of one color.

"So that young scoundrel was one of them lying lawyers, was he, Daniel?" he said to the man next him. "I thought as much, but if I'd a been sure of it, I'd a put the red-hot iron onto him instead of the mare. When did ye meet him? A week ago? I'd like to get a list of them fellows, and when we get hold of the government send 'em all out of the country."

"We'll fix 'em soon," answered Shays, with an oath. "I guess we've got Worcester and Springfield all right, and every town in the west is up in arms. They talk of sending out old Ben Lincoln, but I know all his tricks, and ain't afeard of him. You'll get up a company here? All right, Ike, I knew you'd stand by us."

"Never fear about that, Daniel. Me and my son and Abe Morse have stood about all we can. A year ago I had six cows. What have I got

now? One, and the worst one. And who's taken 'em? I 'll tell ye who 's taken 'em, Daniel Shays. One of them nabobs down in Boston who 's got ships, and houses, and who drinks Madeira wine, and goes to balls in his gold and lace, while I work here day in and day out at the forge, and see my property slipping away from me, and my children doomed to starvation. When the time comes, let us know, and we 'll follow ye."

"Thank you, Ike," answered Shays. "No, we can't wait to-day, for I must take a run over to New Salem. Then I 'm going back to the Berkshires. If they come after any more of your goods, drive 'em off, Ike. Give 'em a taste of that iron of yours. I 'll be back this way before long. Good-bye."

Daniel Shays put spurs to his horse, and, followed by his companions, was soon disappearing over the hill toward Petersham village.

When they were out of sight, Deacon Brown passed his hand over his head and down his beard, went into the kitchen, and found Ruth.

"Give me a drink of water, Ruth, girl. It 's hot at the forge to-day, and the thirst is on me."

"What 's ailing you, father?" said Ruth, handing him the dipper full of water. "You get tired

easily lately, and you are worried. What is it?"

"What is it, ye ask, Ruth? There's enough going on to make me and the whole of us sick. Jest go about your work, and don't ask questions. There. Now I feel better. I've got another job down at the shop, so I'll be going."

"Wait a minute, father," said Ruth, going up to him and taking his great freckled hand in hers. "There is something on your mind, and it is fretting you to death. Tell me what it is. I know you had to borrow money on the cattle, and that they've taken all but one from you. Who were the men you were talking with when I came in just now?"

"Ye ask too many questions for a girl," said the blacksmith, turning away his face. "Let me go, Ruth, I'm busy."

"No, father," said his daughter, stepping in front of the door. "I want to know what's the trouble with you, and I sha'n't let you go until you tell me. Jimmy's at the shop, and can take care of things. Tell me, father."

Deacon Brown hesitated before his daughter's pleading eyes. She was the one object in his life, and he had never refused her anything he could give her. Since his wife died, the year after the

close of the Revolution, his struggle for life had been a hard one, but he had borne up against it bravely, and had tried to keep the facts from his child, hoping all the time that affairs would mend, and that the results of that great battle for liberty would be short-lived in their depressing effects upon the country's industries, and that the fruits of the victory would before long ripen. But instead of growing better, matters grew worse, and little by little Brown saw his hopes fading, and the vision of approaching ruin.

The farm on which he lived was a part of the original grant to his grandfather, Joel Brown, who had come to Nichewaug from Concord toward the end of the seventeenth century. There had been then many hundred acres, but when Isaac inherited it, much of it had passed into other hands, and there remained but some two hundred. This, however, included the richest portions, and the crops of both hay and grain were unrivalled for many miles around.

For three generations, the Browns had been blacksmiths as well as farmers. The little wooden shed by the watering trough at the foot of the mowing had a long history, many famous men having had their horses shod by the members of the family. It was with pride that Deacon Isaac

pointed to the spot where General Stark had stood waiting for his horse, which had cast a shoe "on the ledge yonder."

After the battle of Lexington the blacksmith left the forge and joined the army. His two children remained on the farm with their mother, and although they had many hardships, they were happy. At last, one day, Brown was brought home with a sabre wound on his head, and for more than a month lay between life and death. In the mean while the war had ended, and the country had been freed.

It was but a year after this that his wife died. The blow was a severe one to him, yet he lived on cheerfully in his children, especially in Ruth, who was so much like her mother. But it was not long before he realized that he was fighting against too great odds, for the business of the forge slackened, and the market for his produce vanished. One day he bade good-bye to his children and went to Worcester. Two days later he returned, and for a time was cheerful, and went about his work with energy. During the next three years he went away several times, — on each occasion returning with some present for Ruth, now a new frock, now a bunch of ribbon. In the mean while the children had grown up, and while James

helped his father in the shop, Ruth took care of the house and dairy.

So matters went on until about a year before the opening of this story. Then one day, as Ruth was in the barn-loft gathering eggs, she heard some one enter the cow-shed below, and a moment after she recognized her father's voice.

"Can't ye let them cows stay a little longer?" he said, evidently excited. "I tell ye I 'll give ye another mortgage for a hundred dollars, and if ye 'll be patient ye 'll get all your money in another year."

"I 'm sorry, Mr. Brown," said a voice with a nasal twang and disagreeable precision, "but the limit has been reached. You have paid no interest for more than six months, and I must protect myself. But I tell you what I 'll do for you, for I don't want to press you. I 'll take five of the cows, and leave the one you choose. Then give me your note for a hundred dollars, and I 'll give you fifty for it. Is n't that satisfactory? That 'll clear the interest, and as the mortgages on the farm have more than a year to run, you will have time to collect yourself."

"Very well," answered the blacksmith, and Ruth could hear a deep sigh. The men then left the barn, and the girl came down from her hiding-place.

"I don't understand what they've been talking about," she thought, as she watched the man starting off, "but I'm sure father's in trouble. I won't say anything to him, though, for he knows his own business."

From that day, it seemed to Ruth that her father began to age, and that his work became burdensome to him. Occasionally he joked and laughed, as he had done when he teased her about Abe Morse, but at all other times he went to the forge and back with a heavy step, and with hanging head.

As Ruth stood barring the door, he raised his eyes and looked at her.

"Who told ye about them cows?" he said. "I sold 'em because they was n't no good, and it's my business."

"Nobody told me, father," she answered, returning his gaze. "I guessed it. But I know that either something's troubling you, or you're not well. Tell me what it is, father. I want to help you."

"You dear girl," said the blacksmith, pulling her away from the door and kissing her. "Of course ye 'd help me, as ye always have done. But the trouble's one that no one can help as long as we are trodden down by the courts and the money-lenders. No, Ruth, dear. Go about your

work, and I 'll go about mine, and the good God 'll give us justice before long. That was Captain Daniel Shays who was here when ye came in. Ye 've never heard of him, girl, but I fought beside him ten years ago, and he was a brave man. I must go now, for I 've work to do. Don't fret about me. I suppose I 'm getting old, as folks have to do sooner or later; but I 'm well and hearty, and can swing a hammer for many a year yet. Ay! and a sword and musket, too, when the time comes. Don't think no more about these things, Ruth. Every cloud has a silver lining, and we 'll be all right after Dan Shays has done his work. Have a big pancake to-night, for Jimmy 'll be hungry."

With this he walked out of the shed, over the wall, and down to the shop. Ruth stood a moment, thinking. Then with a look of determination she went about her work.

"I 'm going to find out about this, and I 'm going to do something," she said aloud. "Jimmy is a good boy, but he is ruled by father. I 'll ask somebody else," and she went out into the garden and plucked a marigold and put it in her hair.

CHAPTER IV.

NOT far from the mouth of the Neponset River, in the old town of Dorchester, there stood a century or more ago a venerable dwelling-house, built, it is said, by one of the foremost of those hardy pioneers who landed on the shore of Massachusetts Bay from the good ship Mary and John, to settle that wilderness, which as yet had known no other habitation than the wigwams of the Indian, and the humble log-cabins of the few traders who had ventured to this barren land in search of home and fortune.

At the period of this story the house was the same rectangular two-story building that it had been a century and a half before, with its thick walls lined with brick to keep out the savage cold in winter, and the savage's arrows and bullets at all times. Yet the ell on the northeast corner, and the shed and barn to the northwest, were of modern construction, necessary additions to the limited

space of the old house. In front, toward the south, was the well which never ran dry, shadowed, as was the dwelling itself, by the one spreading elm, whose age no one could tell with accuracy. Near these was the narrow country road, and beyond this again the meadows stretching to the marshes and river's mouth.

How difficult it is for us to realize, as we pass over the great bridge, or walk up the busy streets between brick buildings, dwellings, and churches, that a hundred years ago the Minot House in Dorchester stood almost alone in the midst of the acres which were a part of the tract of land originally granted to George Minot, early in the seventeenth century. The view over the river, the harbor, the islands, and the cape, which was then unobstructed, is now entirely shut in by modern buildings. Milton Hill, backed by the range of the Blue Hills, Squantum, Nantasket, Dorchester Heights, Roxbury, and the lighthouse, are now as distant as the Alps of Savoy. Yet a hundred years ago all these points, and many more besides, could be seen from the house, and orchard rising to the west of it.

As William Perry rode over Dorchester Neck, and took the narrow road toward the Neponset River, the sun was setting over Milton, casting

long shadows into the bay and across the fields and marshes. He had been singing and whistling much of the way from Worcester, but as he approached the end of his journey, he became serious, and absorbed in thought. Perry had, in truth, much on his mind, although those who met him riding along in his careless manner, had little suspected it, for he was always smiling, and had a cheerful, pleasant good-morning for all. But hidden behind this outward levity there was thoughtful gravity, which came to the surface from time to time, and gave his face the expression it wore as he approached the lane leading to Mr. Minot's house. As he turned toward the west, the rays of the setting sun struck his face and roused him, and he looked out over the river and bay.

"I 'm a little early," he thought, as he raised his head and glanced about him, "but I have no doubt Mr. Minot will be glad to see me. Let me see, who did he say were to be at the meeting besides his excellency? Ah, yes, I remember: General Lincoln, Ames, and Otis. I don't think Hancock will come," and he smiled. "If they are wise," he went on a little later, "they 'll call the militia out, but with orders to use judgment. I don't know whether Lincoln 's the right man to

lead them or not. He 's hot-headed, and the people need to be conciliated. I 'll have plenty to tell them, and some advice to give. If they don't want it, they need n't take it."

He was now nearing the house, and a moment later slipped off his mare and knocked on the door. The summons was answered by the host himself.

"Well, Billy," he said, taking the young man cordially by the hand, "I 'm glad you 've come before the others, for I 've some things to ask you about. Sam," he called to the negro boy standing in front of the barn, "take Mr. Perry's mare."

"And look after her carefully, Sammy," said Perry, eying her all over. "She 's had a week of it. Be careful not to feed her too soon. Excuse me, Mr. Minot, I think a good deal of that mare. Thank you, yes, I 'll have a glass of wine with pleasure, sir."

He passed through the front door, and found himself in the hall, or entry-way, leading through the house to the garden beyond. Then his host led him into the low-studded room on the left, and taking down a bottle of Madeira, set it on the mahogany dining-table.

"This has been twice to India, Billy," he said,

lifting his glass and holding it before one of the candles. "A good color, has n't it?"

"And a good flavor, too, Mr. Minot. But do you know that it almost burns my throat to drink it? I have heard so much of the Madeira-drinking merchants of Boston and their vices, during the last three weeks, that I begin to feel as if I were committing a crime to look upon a bottle of it. Do you know, sir, that there is some reason for all this rebellious talk, too? I have been to Springfield, and through the principal towns of Worcester, and there is undoubtedly much suffering there. The people are in a ferment, and desperate, and Shays and Day are doing all in their power to excite them and make them discontented. I had three cases on at Springfield, and I could only get heard in two of 'em. The next day their honors thought it best to close the Court House. Captain Shays had arrived in town, and when I began to address the court, he attempted to stop me."

"Did n't they arrest the rascal?" asked the other, setting down his glass.

"They not only did not arrest him, but the next day they left the town. I don't know whether Dan Shays is the happy owner of Pegasus or not, but four days after this I met him just to the west of Princeton on his way from Worcester. The

first thing we learn, he 'll be attacking Boston. I advise you to see that your brick-lining is secure," he added with a laugh.

"Did you pass through Worcester? I thought you had business there."

"So I had, but when I arrived there the town was in an uproar. I got a room at Davis's little inn, — you know it, — and rested comparatively well. But I assure you that I was perfectly satisfied to start for home early the next morning. This side of Worcester is rather more congenial than the other just at present. But I really don't wonder much at the farmers' grumblings. There is absolutely no market for their produce. One old chap I met up in Petersham seemed to be better off than most of 'em. He had a little blacksmith-shop next the road, and appeared to be working comfortably. But he was an exception. Everywhere else, Springfield, Barre, Worcester, they were doing nothing but abuse government and praise Shays as if he were the Lord himself."

"Did Shays attempt any violence against you when he met you?"

"No, and I am surprised that he did n't. But they tell me that he does fairly well in that respect, and will prevent any assault if he can do so. I am inclined to think that he expected I would get my

dose in Worcester. But I followed his advice, and that probably saved me."

"What was that?"

"He advised me to change my clothes," said Perry, bursting into a peal of laughter, "and I did it, as you must have noticed. I got this homespun suit in Princeton, and my other is in this package. If you will allow me the use of one of your rooms I will don it, for I 'm afraid old General Lincoln would object to my present costume, even were Governor Bowdoin to countenance it. Thank you, I will take the candle. I know the way, Mr. Minot, so don't trouble yourself to come with me. By the way, who is coming besides the general and the governor?"

"My young friends, Ames and Otis."

"Has his excellency decided what to do? Does he mean to send Lincoln to the west at once?"

"That 's my impression, Billy, but I 'm not positive about it. Go and take off those clothes, or you will be mistaken for one of Shays' lieutenants, and what you say will not have a good effect. When you are ready come down and eat something. They 'll be here in less than an hour."

Perry took the candle and went up the narrow stairway to the room above that in which he had

been sitting. He drew the chintz curtains, set the candlestick upon the small inlaid loo table, and dressed. When he went down to the dining-room again he found his host awaiting him, and an ample repast spread upon the table.

"Now I feel more like myself, sir," he said, as he entered the room.

"I 'm rather relieved," said Mr. Minot, smiling. "I was not sure, when I first saw you, that you had not joined the rebels. Now while you 're eating your supper tell me, please, just what you 've seen since you 've been gone, and what your impression is as to what should be done. I have heard of the riots in and about the western towns, but from no one whom I could trust."

"I am not sure, sir," said Perry, his face assuming a more serious expression, "that I can tell you much of interest, but I 'll try to give you an idea of what I discovered. As you know, I went mainly on professional business, although I considered myself more or less of an envoy of his excellency, because of what he said to me before I started. So I took particular pains to notice the temper of the people and gather what I could from conversation with them. I went through Cambridge, Watertown, Groton, and so on toward the west, and everywhere the cry was for more

money and more work. The news of the General Court's refusal to grant the petition for the issuing of currency had spread like wild-fire, and the farmers and townsfolk were gathered in angry groups. I tell you, sir, they looked savage. But they also looked pitiable, and I was sorry for them. Poor, half-starved, and in some cases ragged. We cannot deny the fact that they are suffering terribly."

The young man lifted his glass of Madeira, but set it down without tasting it. Then he proceeded:

"Strange to say, the farther west I got the more stirred up they seemed to be. It was not until I reached Hatfield that I saw anything really revolutionary. You have probably heard an account of what happened two weeks ago."

"Yes. I 've been informed of the convention, but nothing of its particulars."

"Well, sir, it was the most exciting event of my life, and I came nearer getting frightened than I ever have before or since. The mass of those gathered in the convention were well-meaning, honest farmers, but the leaders and orators were low, disreputable fellows. Where they came from, God only knows. They seemed to have the convention entirely under their control, and the vote to abolish the Court of Common Pleas was

unanimous. Then came a motion that Daniel Shays should be elected governor of the Commonwealth. There were shouts and cries for Shays, and for every old gaol-bird let loose, and finally the meeting broke up, and they forgot to elect him. I then went to Springfield, with the results I have already told you, sir."

"Then you really think, Billy, that there is serious trouble ahead?"

"I 'm sure of it, sir. It is fortunate that we have such a strong hand as Governor Bowdoin's to take hold of it. I say to you, though, as I will say to the gentlemen this evening, that I pity the people from the bottom of my heart. They misunderstand us, and we misunderstand them. It is the old story. Concessions will have to be made on both sides, and something will have to be done to relieve the agricultural districts. As to Shays and his mountebanks, they should be captured and punished. The real sufferers should be treated with consideration. You 've got me started, sir, and I 'm afraid I 'll tell all my story before they come, and a double dose of it would weary you."

"Not at all, my boy, not at all. What you have already said has set me to thinking. I 've been inclined to look upon this whole trouble as caused

by an unreasonable, shiftless rabble, but I 'm not entirely sure that there are not two sides to it. There 's a coach coming up the road now, so you may reserve the rest until they come. Ah! it 's his excellency and General Lincoln. I can see them getting out."

The next moment the door was opened, and the two distinguished men entered the house.

CHAPTER V.

THE two men who had come to the old house in Dorchester on invitation of its owner, were at this time past the half-century of life, and both had seen the struggles and successes through which their country had passed since the culmination of the French wars, and both bore the scars of battle; the one that of the forum, the other that of active service at the front.

James Bowdoin was a scholar and a statesman, Benjamin Lincoln a farmer and a soldier. Yet in many ways they were much alike. Both were ardent patriots; firm in their faith in the new republic; of unimpeachable integrity, unflinching courage, and quick to distinguish between right and wrong. To those who did not know the two men, Governor Bowdoin seemed the more tractable and sweet-tempered. But this was not truly the case, for a kinder and more compassionate heart than General Lincoln's, none had. He at times carried his ideas of justice to

extremes, which cost him popularity; but by nature he was mildness itself. Neither Governor Bowdoin nor General Lincoln allowed the desire for popular favor to stand in the way of doing what in their clear judgment was right, and for the best interests of the people they were called upon to serve.

In personal appearance the two men were strikingly different. The governor's features were in some respects not unlike those of the last colonial governor, Thomas Hutchinson, though it is doubtful if a reference to the resemblance would have gratified the patriot and friend of John and Samuel Adams. There were the same high forehead, prominent nose and chin, and curving mouth. Yet the eyes were very different, being large and prominent. Although fifty-eight years of age, Governor Bowdoin's carriage was erect, and he held his head high, which gave him an air of great dignity. He was also somewhat of a dandy: his white waving wig, green broadcloth coat and small-clothes, white stockings, and silver-buckled shoes being immaculate in their appearance, and irreproachable in their cut. As William Perry saw him, he was glad that he had disposed of his homespun outfit.

General Lincoln was less careful of his dress.

His bullet-shaped head, bald on top, was devoid of wig. His clothes were of black broadcloth throughout, finished below by black stockings and black shoes. He carried a gold-headed cane, and as he walked a slight limp was noticeable, the result of his wound received during the Revolution. His face was heavy, and the drawn mouth and raised eyebrows gave him a dogged expression. Yet the set lips parted as he entered the room, and the smile that spread over his face was pleasant. Such were the two men who were to put down with a firm hand the insurrection led by Daniel Shays.

"Good-evening. Good-evening, Minot," said the governor, extending his hand. "Ah! here you are, my young friend. Lincoln, don't you know Charles Perry's son? No? He 's a rising young lawyer, and he can give us some news from the west, too, I 've no doubt."

"I never met the young man before," said the general, returning William's polite salutation, "but I knew your father well, sir. He was with me in Virginia in '77."

"I remember his speaking of you, honored sir," answered Perry, again bowing. "Of course you 're known to every one."

"Tut, tut, young man," said Lincoln, shutting

his mouth with a snap, and looking up from under his brows. "I 'm a farmer, sir, and am known to no one at present."

"You 're too modest, Lincoln," said the governor, smiling.

"Call it what you like, your excellency. I 'm obeying my commander-in-chief, otherwise I should have remained at Hingham. Did you say this young man has been west? What did you hear, sir?"

"With his excellency's permission I will tell you of my trip."

"Speak, William. We 've come here to be informed."

"Excuse me, your excellency, but Ames and Otis will be with us before long. Don't you think it would be better to wait for them? Otis is very enthusiastic, and Ames is vying with our young friend here," said the host, smiling at Perry, "for honors at the bar. He is a brilliant young man, and may be able to give us good advice."

"By all means wait for them. Now that you have taken out that bottle of Madeira, we can discuss that. Eh! Lincoln? Perhaps it 's better than that I offered you yesterday."

"I doubt it," answered the general, lifting his glass to his lips, "but nevertheless I 'm willing

to try it. It 's good, very good, Minot," he went on, smacking his lips and closing his eyes. " I compliment you on it. Hancock has some very like it."

" It 's the same, sir," answered Mr. Minot. " I see you have n't lost your taste yet."

" Oh, no, not in the least," and he lifted the glass again, and closed his eyes.

" Here they are. I hear their horses. Now, Billy, get yourself in readiness, for you 'll be well plied with questions."

" Mr. Perry," said Governor Bowdoin, a little later, as they all sat round the table in the dining-room, " I 've about made up my mind what to do, but I 'd like your report. I think, too, that General Lincoln would be glad to hear it."

" Of course, of course ! " said the general, nodding across the table to Perry.

" Then I 'll give you such information as I 've been able to gather," answered the young man. " I found discontent everywhere in the western towns. There was bad blood enough before the General Court refused the petition, but when that came, followed by an appropriation to the use of the Federal government, the excitement was unbounded, and the people swore that they would prevent its being accomplished. About this time

Daniel Shays began his work of rebellion, and he has gathered about him all the cut-throats he can get hold of. The trouble 's only just begun, your excellency."

"I understand that in Lenox the people take a more reasonable view of matters," said the governor.

"So I 've heard, sir, but I did n't go there. I went, however, through Pelham and Petersham, and I can assure you that you have very little idea of the irritation of the farmers. They swear to stop the courts, and block business, until their demands are granted. They are willing to follow Shays or anybody else who will help them accomplish their purpose."

"I think I understand the situation," said the governor, raising his glass and inclining his head toward his host. "Lincoln, will you do something for me?"

The general looked at him a moment without speaking, then opening his mouth with a snap he said, —

"What is it, sir? That depends upon what it is."

"I want you to take command of the militia and put this revolt down at once. There is no one who can do it as effectively."

"Yes, there is," answered Lincoln, rather shortly.

"Who is it, pray? I told you a little while ago that you were getting too modest, Lincoln. Who is it?"

"Shepard. He's got two whole legs, and I have n't. But of course I am at your service if you command me."

"But you would prefer not to undertake it?"

"To tell you the truth, yes. I 'm getting lazy, and with five or six hundred men Shepard can do the work as well as I could."

"Then let it be Shepard. But if he does n't succeed at once I shall call on you."

"All right. He 'll succeed easily enough. I knew this Shays when he was with Gates, and it 'll take about an ounce of powder to blow him into Rhode Island."

"Governor Bowdoin," said young Fisher Ames, who thus far had kept silence. "If your excellency will permit it, I would like very much to volunteer my services."

"And I too," broke in Harrison Gray Otis. "We 're both old soldiers, as you know, sir," he added with a laugh.

"Very patriotic young men, to be sure," said the governor, with a nod of approval. "I 'm delighted. And you, Mr. Perry?"

"To tell you the truth, sir," answered William,

firmly, "I 'd rather not just at present. I prefer to act as a mediator, for I cannot convince myself that the farmers are entirely wrong in their feelings. I will do all I can to assist you, and to bring Shays and his immediate followers to justice, but I do not feel as yet like taking arms against a people who have already all they can bear, and who are at least honest and sincere. I 'm glad of an opportunity of expressing myself, and I feel sure that neither your excellency nor these other gentlemen will misunderstand me."

"I understand you perfectly," said Ames, pleasantly. "But I think you 're a little too conscientious. It 's against Shays that we are going, not against these people."

"Very true. But the farmers will consider any movement against the leaders as directed against them and their rights. My advice would be to call a convention and invite the farmers to send representatives to it, then come to some amicable settlement."

"A very good idea, my boy," said the governor, "were it not too late. So long as this rascal is at large he will allow no reconciliation, and our first step must be to put him behind the bars. Then we can have such a convention as you suggest. But you are quite right in your position since you

feel as you do. You can undoubtedly help us, though, in other ways, and I 'm sure that you will do so."

"With the greatest pleasure, your excellency. The Supreme Court meets in Springfield next month, and I shall appear before it. I can tell you, sir, that that will take some courage, for Shays will never allow it to sit if he can prevent it. I start next week, and I 'll learn all I can and report to you as before."

"Very well, then," said the governor, "and you, young men, report to General Shepard at once. The order will be issued to-morrow for him to stand in readiness to march at any moment. I 'm sorry you won't go, Lincoln, but I 've no doubt you 're right, and you 've done your share, and should be permitted to rest on your farm for a time. Everything seems to be understood, so I 'll say good-night, Minot."

"Good-night, your excellency. Good-night, general."

After the coach had rolled away, Ames said to William, —

"Since you 're not going to join us, I 'll ask you to take charge of that Foss and Kelly case for me. I can't very well be soldier and lawyer too, but I 'm inclined to think you 'll get the worst of it."

"You 're undoubtedly right, Ames. But I 'll look after your matter with great pleasure."

"And by the way," added Ames, "old Jerry Piper, the pawnbroker, came to me the other day about a mortgage that he holds on property in Petersham. Perhaps you 'd like to look after that, too."

"Petersham? Yes, I intend passing through Petersham. I had my mare shod there yesterday by an old red-headed pirate with a pretty red-headed daughter, and I want to see her again. If you 'll kindly send word to Piper to look me up, I 'll see what I can do for him on my way out."

"Thank you, Mr. Minot, I must be saying good-night," said Ames, bowing. "Are you going with me, Otis? All right, then, come along. Good-night, Perry. Don't be infatuated by that red-headed girl;" and laughing merrily he and Otis started away on the road toward Boston. When they were gone, Mr. Minot said, —

"I congratulate you, Billy, on your courage. I 'm of your opinion, and that 's why I did n't enter more into the conversation. We all agree that this rebellion must be put down, but the manner of doing so is debatable. You must be tired, so I will allow you to go to bed. Good-night."

CHAPTER VI.

IN a back lane leading off Purchase Street in Boston, Jeremiah Piper, the money-lender, had his shop. The wooden house was low and unpainted, and the frame of the doorway leaned over to one side as if, tired of standing on both feet, it were resting from its hundred years of labor in holding up the rotten timbers above. There were two rooms on the ground floor: that fronting the street low and dingy, with no other furniture than a long table covered with a few old watches, jewelry, pipes, knives, books, swords, pistols, and every description of second-hand apparel; two wooden chairs, whose legs seemed as weary as the door-frame without; and a greasy, wooden cupboard with closed doors, which contained the coats and small-clothes of those gentlemen who were so pressed for money that they were forced to part with them until such times as their fortunes should turn, and they should be able

to recover them — a time which came to few. The rear room was much like the other, save that for furniture it had only a wooden desk, one chair, and a row of shelves fastened to the wall, on which rested the ledgers and account-books, together with one or two dusty law books relating to mortgages and debtors and creditors. The twin of the front door led to the back yard, surrounded by a high wooden fence, and carpeted with weeds and vines which vainly tried to climb about the solitary pear-tree, which looked weepingly down upon them as if imploring them to give it their support. When, as was his custom, Jeremiah threw the remnants of his solitary meal out of the window above, there appeared, as by magic, as many cats as dwell in the Forum of Augustus. Jeremiah had occupied the premises for over thirty years, and it was fortunate that the feline scavengers went about unmolested, else the filth and stench would have been even worse than it was.

Jeremiah himself was a fit companion for his surroundings. As he stood, he was but little over five feet tall. Had he been straightened out he might have reached six inches nearer to the smoked timbers. His black coat was too long, and mirror-like between the shoulders, and his brown small-clothes were of many shades. The

wig he wore should have been curly and white, and probably had been in years gone by, but now it was straight and yellow. His black bead-like eyes almost touched the bridge of his suspiciously hooked nose, and his pointed chin rubbed against the white choker (white at long intervals) which hid the bony neck, and had hidden it for many a day.

No one knew of Jeremiah's antecedents, whence he came or got his name. But he was well known to a certain class, and it was suspected by them that his face did not belie his origin. Yet he always denied it, and said he was of "good old Puritan stock," and no one could prove that he told aught but the truth — at least about this subject of conjecture. To his clients, his neighbors, and their children, he was known as Jerry the money-lender, and that was all.

He was sitting before the desk in the rear room, with his nose in close proximity to a large book which lay open before him, and whose pages he turned with his moistened thumb, at the same time running his black finger-nail down them as if in search of something. Finally he raised his finger from the book to the end of his nose and scratched it vigorously. Then he looked toward the front room and called in a nasal voice, —

"Samuel, come here."

A short, red-faced man of about fifty, with a bald head and spectacles, rolled into the room and stood before Jerry.

"Samuel," said the latter, looking at the clerk with his little eyes and speaking with great precision, "when do those Brown notes fall due? I can't find them here."

"Which Brown, Mr. Piper? There 're three Browns on our books."

"That Brown up in Petersham, Samuel. The man I went up to see last year, and got the cattle and notes for interest from. Don't you remember?"

"Ah, yes, Mr. Piper. Them fall due next week, sir. Sixth of September, I think. You mean them notes you took last year, or the mortgage?"

"The notes, Samuel, the notes. The mortgage don't expire for a month yet."

"Well, sir, the notes fall due the sixth, Mr. Piper."

"Don't you enter them on the books, Samuel? I can't find them."

"Let me look, sir. Here they are: one for a hundred dollars payable in coin; one for two hundred, payable in coin; due September the sixth, 1786."

"These must be attended to at once, Samuel. Run out and see if that young lawyer Perry is in; Mr. Ames has turned me over to him. You know where to find him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then go, and come back as quick as you can. I must see him at once. And Samuel, buy me threepence worth of snuff on the way back."

The man rolled out of the door and up the street, and was soon out of sight.

"If those notes ain't paid when due I 'll be obliged to do something," said Piper, with a chuckle, rising and going into the front room. "I 've got that property, sure, for he 'll never be able to pay the mortgage, and the law 'll have to be obeyed. I 'm sorry, very sorry to be obliged to inconvenience him, but I must live. I guess this young Perry 's honest. I never deal with any one who is n't. I must have a man of strict integrity, always strict integrity, like myself," and his eyes snapped and he scratched the end of his nose.

"I 'm for law and order," he went on, walking behind the long table, and picking up one article after another and examining them all carefully. "No rebellion, no riots. No cheating honest men out of their honest earnings. No."

He returned to the back room and took from a

shelf a worn three-cornered hat and put it on his head. Then he picked up a cane and started out into the lane, and stood in front of his door, peering down toward the street.

"Ah! here he comes," he said a moment later. "Did you find him, Samuel?"

"He 's waiting for you, Mr. Piper."

"Very well. Be careful while I 'm gone."

Jeremiah Piper hobbled out of the lane, into the street, and round the corner.

"These are bad times, bad times," he muttered, as he approached the building in which Perry had his office. "There was a time when money came easier, and if I was n't a prudent man, and saving, I 'd be as bad off as some others. Coin is scarce, very scarce, but I 'm saving." Just before he rapped on the door, he thought, "I 'll test this young man a little before I employ him."

"Good-morning, Mr. Piper," said Perry, as the money-lender entered. "Mr. Ames has spoken to me about your matter up in Petersham. I 'm going in that direction in a few days."

"Yes, sir," answered Piper, rather shortly, disappointed at not having a chance at the first word. "Brown, of Petersham. A very important matter, sir, and one that cannot wait long. He 's a man of property, sir, and I 've been very lenient with him,

very lenient, and I 'm in hard straits for money, sir, and cannot renew the loan."

"When do the notes come due, Mr. Piper?"

"Next Friday, sir."

"And how are they secured?"

"I hold two mortgages on his property, sir, expiring in about a month. The notes are given in payment of back interest. I 'm never hard on any one, Mr. Perry, but he must pay these notes when due."

"Very well," said Perry, fumbling over some papers on his desk. "I 'll write him what you say. Then I 'll try to see him when I go west. What did you say his name was?"

"Isaac Brown. You 'll find him easily, near the highway. Tell him when you write that the notes must be paid at once. I 'm a poor man, Mr. Perry, and I hope your fees won't be large."

"We 'll arrange all that later," said William, with an amused smile. "Have you the notes with you?"

"Here they are, sir. Kindly give me a receipt for them, for the people are excited, and you might come to some harm, and of course I must be protected. Thank you. Keep them in a safe place, Mr. Perry."

"Have no anxiety, Mr. Piper. I 've many of

these cases on hand, and I 'm careful. I have your address, and will let you know what I learn."

"Thank you, sir. Anything more you wish to know?"

"No, not at present. The notes are sufficient. Good-morning."

As Piper went back toward his shop he muttered, —

"I guess he 's honest. He 's a good reputation, and is making a name for himself, and we have to take some risks."

As he entered his door, he noticed a rumbling sound, and looking about him saw Samuel asleep in a chair in the corner.

"Wake up, Samuel," he squeaked, going up to him and giving him a poke with his cane. "I 'll be robbed of everything if you do like this. Oh, the smell of beer! You 're doing this all the time now, and I 'll have to be rid of you if you don't look after my property when I 'm away."

Samuel woke slowly and turned his little red eyes on his master with a grin.

"Who 'll you get to take my place, Mr. Piper? I 'm pretty well acquainted with your business, and it 's been a hard lesson to learn. I was n't asleep. I had an eye open, sir, and I was watching carefully."

"You were n't asleep, Samuel? Well, mend your ways a little, and I 'll try to keep you, but I 'm losing money now, and can't afford to take any risks. I 'm going up-stairs to eat my dinner, so stop that blinking and wake up."

Jeremiah threw his hat upon the shelf, put his cane in its accustomed corner, and climbed the rickety flight of stairs to his room above. He went to a small cupboard and took from it a very much soiled paper package, which he placed upon the greasy topped wooden table. Then he drew up the only chair, and undoing the package took from it a piece of high flavored, highly animated cheese, a cube of bread, and a dried herring. This was his dinner. When he had finished he went to the window, the presence of which would have been scarcely perceptible to a stranger, because of the thick covering of dirt upon the panes, and threw the scraps into the yard. There was the sudden sound of music, and cats appeared from every direction, to share the frugal repast.

Returning to the middle of the room, Jeremiah listened, and hearing no other sound than the snoring of Samuel below, stepped forward and bolted the door. He then crossed on tiptoe to a spot near the chimney-piece, stopped, and listened again. He stooped down, and lifting a plank

in the floor, drew out from beneath it an iron box. It was filled with British, Spanish, and French coin, and papers. He placed Perry's receipts in it, put it back in its place, covered it with the plank, crossed the room, and went downstairs.

CHAPTER VII.

THREE days after Jerry Piper's interview with William Perry, Deacon Isaac Brown stood at the smithy door, looking out over the fields toward the hills, where a bit of color here and there already showed that summer was passing, and that preparations for winter would soon have to be begun. His face was haggard and drawn; he passed his right hand over his head and eyes, and drew a deep sigh. In his left he held a letter. It was evident that he had read it already once at least, and that the news it brought was not cheering. He folded the paper, put it in his pocket, turned and went back into the shop.

"Jimmy," he said to his son, who was working at the bench, "it 's near dinner time. Ye may go now. I sha'n't go up to-day, for I 've got something to do here. Bring me down a bite when ye come back."

"All right, father," answered his son, "if Bill Smyth comes along, give him them shears. They 're all fixed."

Deacon Brown went to the door and watched his son until he was turning the corner, then went back, sat down on a stool, and took the letter from his pocket. He held it at arm's length and examined it, then read it half aloud.

Mr. Isaac Brown, *Petersham.*

Dear Sir, — Two notes bearing date 6th September, 1785, made to Mr. Jeremiah Piper, Boston, have been left with me for collection. I must request payment when due.

Your obedient servant,

Wm. Perry.

Brown read it twice, then let his hand drop on his knee, gazed out through the door, and thought. At last he roused himself, got up, went to the little window, and looked over the mowing toward the barn and house.

"I 've worked hard for them little ones," he thought with a sigh, "but it 's getting too much for me. Ruth 's beginning to suspect something, and I can't keep it from her much longer. Well, I 've done my best." He sighed heavily and passed his bare arm across his brow, then went on, "To think of them fields and house and all going to

that 'ere old thieving money-lender. I can't and won't have it. Three hundred dollars! Where can I get 'em? Due day after to-morrow, and he won't give me no more time. There 's the mare, the cow, the two hogs, the cart and tools. But I can't live if I let 'em all go." He paused a moment, and then raised the letter, and read it again. "William Perry. What 's he got to do with it, anyhow? One of them damned lawyers that 's a robbing of us all, and the other fellows too. He can't do nothing, for the courts 'll be done their dirty business before many days, and them lawyers and judges won't have nothing to say about us. I 'll tell 'em I can't pay now, and I won't, until the government gives us something to pay with. I won't take no notice of 'em." For a few minutes he felt brighter, and the furrow between his brows smoothed out a little. It did not last long, however, and the anxious expression soon returned. "I dunno, tho'," he muttered, rising and going outside the door again, "they 've made a good many of 'em pay, and some as have n't been able have gone to prison. Perhaps he 'll take the cart and tools, and wait a bit longer. I dunno." He crammed the letter into his pocket, and then went on. "Let 's see what I 've got. Twenty-seven dollars; the two hogs that can be

salted down for winter; the cow, and then the hens. I forgot the hens, but they won't lay any in winter. Well, never mind. I 'll wait, and perhaps we 'll pull through somehow."

Just then he heard a sound, and looking round saw Ruth coming toward him.

"What are ye doing here, girl?" he said on seeing her. "I told Jimmy to bring me a bite when he come back, and ye 've got it yourself."

"I thought I 'd like to fetch it myself, father," said Ruth, quietly. "Jimmy 's busy up to the barn, and could n't leave. Sit down and eat it, and I 'll stay with you."

"What 's he doing up to the barn, Ruth? There 's work for him here, and I told him to come back. When I was a boy I did as my father told me to do."

"He 's doing something for me, so don't blame him. I want to speak to you, father. Jimmy told me that you got a letter this morning, and that you 've been reading and reading it, and fretting about it. I came down to ask you what it is about."

Deacon Brown turned away his head, and looked out of the door. Then he said quickly, —

"I ain't had no letter, Ruth, and Jimmy 's no business to be telling ye such lies."

"Are you sure, father? When I came down the hill I saw something in your hand that looked like a piece of paper. Don't keep it from me, father. Tell me what it is."

"Can't I have a piece of paper in my hand without its being a letter, girl?" said her father, moving nervously. "Ain't I to be allowed to do as I like?"

"You 're keeping something from me, father," said Ruth, gently, going up to him and taking his hand. "Tell me what the letter 's about."

"Supposing I have got a letter," said Brown, turning away his head, "ain't that my business? Can't I have a letter without all this fuss? Go back to the house, Ruth, and send Jimmy down here. I want to talk to him. Let me be."

Ruth still held his hand.

"Father," she said, going in front of him and looking him in the face, "you have got a letter this morning and it 's fretting you. It 's got something to do with that man who came up last year about the cattle, and if you don't tell me about it, I 'll find out some way. You 've worked hard and done everything for Jimmy and me, and now I want to do something for you. I know all about the troubles that are going on, and I want to help you."

Deacon Brown looked at his daughter, and his eyes moistened.

"I see it ain't no use, Ruth dear," he said with a sigh, "a-trying to deceive ye. I hoped to keep it from ye till times were better, but it ain't no use. Yes, Ruth, I 've had a letter from a lawyer to-day, and he wants me to pay three hundred dollars before Friday. I ain't got it, Ruth, and God only knows how I can get it. But I won't pay it to no lawyer," he added, rousing himself and passing his hand across his eyes. "It lies betwixt me and Piper."

"Who 's Piper, father? The man who was here?"

"Yes. Jenks told me about him. Said he 'd borrowed money of him, and found him honest. Perhaps he won't press me after all, so don't worry, Ruth. When Dan Shays gets started, he 'll straighten things out a bit. Now run back to the house, and don't think no more about it. I did n't mean to tell ye, but ye 've got the best of me, as ye always do."

He took the girl's face in his two clumsy hands, and kissed it.

"Send Jimmy down."

"Don't scold him for telling me, father. He meant all right."

"No, Ruth, I won't say nothing to him, but I 'd like to give him a beating. He 's too meddlesome."

When Ruth was gone, Deacon Brown went to the door and watched her.

"A mighty good girl," he mused, looking lovingly after her. "Well, I dunno but it's best she should know. It kind of eases my mind to have told her. What 's the use of worrying so much anyway?" he went on, going back into the shop and beginning to blow the bellows. "If I can't pay I can't, and I 'll tell 'em so. There ain't nobody paying nothing now, and there ain't nothing to pay nobody with, and I guess old Piper 'll have to stand it 'long with the rest of the thieves. Gosh, I feel really better. For a spell I felt as though the bottom had dropped out of everything, but the sight and talk of that girl would cure the small-pox. If that lawyer shows his face up here I 'll fix him," and he began to laugh nervously.

"Well, well, to think of my fretting about paying. Here, Jimmy, why did n't ye come down as I told ye to? Do ye think I can blow and work at the same time? Get to work, boy, and don't take so long about your dinner next time. When I was your age I 'd take five minutes for dinner. Wake up and blow the bellows."

Jimmy went to work, and it was some time before either spoke. Then the son said, —

"Heard the news, father? I see Abe Morse this noon, and he says Captain Shays is getting men together near Pelham, and is going to march to Springfield to stop the court from setting. Abe says he's a-going with 'em, and wants me to go too."

"Well, why don't ye, then, Jimmy? Perhaps it 'll put some life into ye to hear the bullets whizzing. I 'd go myself if it was n't for leaving Ruth alone. It 's a good cause, Jimmy, and if they need ye, go."

"I kind of thought ye 'd want me to stay here and help ye with the work," answered his son. "I ain't particular about going, and I 'd as lief stay here with you."

"Well, I had n't as lief have ye," said Deacon Brown, throwing down his hammer and looking across at his son with a scowl. "In the first place there ain't enough work for us both here now, and then again I don't want any of my blood to be afeard of fighting for his rights, and that 's what 's ailing ye! If ye had half the pluck of your sister, you 'd be a man by this time, instead of a shiftless blockhead. Ye 're going along with Abe, so make up your mind to it. When does he start?"

"This afternoon, father. He 's going to New Salem and Pelham, and then on. But I 'd rather stay to home."

"I ain't got no doubt ye would," said his father, "but ye 'll go up to the house and get that 'ere musket of mine, and sech other things as ye want to carry, and go up to Abe's and start with him. I 've got business to do here, so go along."

"Who 'll ye get to pump the bellows?" asked Jimmy, grasping at a last straw.

"Don't ye fret about that. Jest ye do what I tell ye. Good-bye. Tell Ruth I 'll be home to supper early."

Jimmy picked up his coat, and went out of the shop and up to the house without another word.

"Now I 'll be able to attend to my own business without any meddling," thought Deacon Brown, after his son was gone. "It 's my duty to send him, too. I 'll go myself later if they need me, but I 've got to wait until after them notes and mortgages comes due, and I can't leave Ruth. Them notes and mortgages! I 'd almost forgotten about 'em since Ruth was here. Well," and he stopped suddenly in his work and his face grew serious, "supposing after all — supposing after all — why, I feel kind of dizzy. I ain't never felt

jest this way before. Guess I 'll run down to the trough and get a drink. Well, what was I a-saying? Oh, yes, them mortgages and notes. Gosh, ain't it hot in the shop to-day, and ain't this hammer heavy! Let 's see; them notes — I can't seem to think straight."

He reeled out of the door and down to the watering-trough, and bathed his face, and drank.

"Now I feel better," he said, as he went back toward the shop. "I guess I did n't eat enough dinner. But Ruth 'll have a good supper early. I do feel awful weak in the legs, and can't hardly walk, but it 'll pass off. Perhaps it 's keeping them things on my mind so long, and then throwing 'em off all of a sudden. I can't see how anybody can be obliged to pay when they ain't got nothing."

He picked up the hammer again, but was too weak to wield it. Then he took his coat over his arm, went out, locked the door of the smithy, and with a tottering step walked round the road toward the house. As he strolled leisurely along, he began to feel better, and by the time he reached the shed he was himself again, though he looked weary.

"Is Jimmy gone?" he said to Ruth, as he entered the kitchen.

"Yes, father," answered his daughter, "he 's gone, and I 'm feeling real bad to have him go. Do you think he 'll get hurt, father?"

"Pshaw, girl. Don't worry about that. Jimmy ain't the kind that 'll get hurt if he can help it. Give me supper. I 'm kind of tired and hungry."

CHAPTER VIII.

"RUTH," said Deacon Brown to his daughter, as he sat watching her clearing the table after supper, "I no business to a-told ye what I did, this afternoon, but when ye came and looked at me and I got your expression, I knew ye had guessed my secret, and I could n't keep it back. Ye ain't fretting about it, are ye, child?"

"No," answered Ruth, looking round at him with a smile, "I 'm not fretting, unless you are, father. All that troubles me is to see you so worried and tired looking. I feel much better now that you 've told me about it, and I 'll try to look after you a little better. Won't you tell me how all this trouble came on, and why we 're made to have such a hard time of it?"

Her father hesitated, and for a few moments sat gazing through the window toward the blueberry patch. At last he roused himself, and turning to Ruth said, —

"I dunno as it 'll do any hurt to tell ye, Ruth, and I 've kept it all bottled up so long that it 's trying to burst through my skin. It 's like the measles, better when it 's broke out. Well, ye can remember something of the war, girl, for ye were seven years old when we whipped the red-coats at Lexington. But ye never knew nothing about what brought it on, and why we fought so hard. I 'll tell ye if ye 'd like to hear it."

"I 've finished my work now, and I 'll sit down and listen to you," said Ruth, wiping her hands, and drawing a chair close to her father. "All I know is that the British would n't give us our rights, and we drove 'em out of the country, and got our freedom."

Deacon Brown shook his head slowly, and said,—

"Yes, Ruth, we drove 'em away, and got the country from 'em, but God knows we ain't got our freedom yet. Perhaps some of those rich men down in Boston have got it, but we ain't, and don't seem likely to. We are more slaves than before the war, Ruth, and I sometimes wish we 'd never gone through it."

"Is everybody as badly off as we are?" asked Ruth, looking up at him in surprise.

"Most everybody, at least them as has to earn

their living with their own hands. We farmers and working people are at the mercy of the rich folks, the merchants and lawyers, who never did no work, but sit and drink and gamble all day and all night. No, Ruth, we ain't got our freedom yet."

He paused and drew a long sigh, then went on, —

"I was going to tell ye how it all happened, and why things is as they are. It was this way. Let me have a drink of water first, for my mouth 's kind of dry. Now I 'll tell ye. When I was a boy we was living along here pretty comfortable, and the farm and forge was paying well. Of course we had our bad years like all of 'em, but we had plenty to eat and plenty to wear, and we never worried much about nothing. Your grandfather was a hard-working man, and brought us all up to do as he done. We lived along from day to day, and thought of nothing but our work and the Lord. Nobody heard no grumbling up this way, though things was n't always easy, and after Louisburg taxes was heavy; but we remained good subjects of the king, and went on same as before. It was n't until along in the sixties that the rumblings of revolution which had started in Boston reached us up here in the hills. The king and his

Parliament had begun to put on their extra taxes, and we had begun to feel it. That, so far as we was concerned, was the beginning of the Revolution. So it went on until them good men down in Boston threw the tea overboard rather 'n pay the tax on it.

"I was a-working in the forge one day, a-humming that hymn of Watts's, when Josh Morse, Abe's father, came running up to the shop and said that there 'd been a fight with the British soldiers at Lexington, and all the farmers was taking up arms to defend their rights. I was struck dumb, for I had n't no idea that war was really coming. I threw down the hammer and ran up to the house, took father's old musket and sword, and in the afternoon said good-bye to your mother and ye and Jimmy and jumped on the horse's back and started south. Ye know all about that war, Ruth, and how it killed your mother, and came nigh killing me."

Deacon Brown stopped and passed the back of his hand across his eyes, then after a moment continued, —

"Well, it ain't no use crying about them things now. It was God's will, and I 've stood it the best I knew how. After all these troubles was past I began work again with a light heart,

thinking that everything 'd turn out all right, and that the farm and shop would make my fortune, and that ye and Jimmy would be well cared for when I was gone. Somehow things did n't go on as I expected, and it wa'n't long before I see that our dream of a free country had n't been nothing but a dream, and I was beginning to wake up. Instead of improving, business grew worse and worse, and we could n't sell nothing, and taxes grew bigger. In '83 they put on the tax for supporting the army, and giving them lazy officers that never done no work gold lace and fine clothes. This riled us farmers, and for a time there was signs of trouble, but we stood things as best we could. At last the money give out, and we could n't get no pay for our work or our goods, and then, last summer, we petitioned the General Court to give us some kind of money, paper or anything, but they refused. The thing has come to a head now, Ruth, and it 'll soon burst."

"What have you got to borrow so much money for, anyway?" asked Ruth, when he had stopped.

"For taxes mostly. But I 've got to live and work the farm and forge, and it all costs money."

"Why did n't you borrow it of some one you knew here, father?"

"Because none of 'em ain't got any money,

Ruth. The money 's all in Boston, and I had to go there. I heard of a man named Piper who had loaned to folks about here, and I went down to see him, and he let me have what I wanted. When the interest come due he come up here, and I could n't pay it, so I gave him the cows, and a new note, and he let me have fifty dollars more. He 's seemed kind of accommodating, and I guess if it was n't for that rascally lawyer he 'd let it stand a little longer. This Piper was a kind of poor-looking man, and I guess he was doing it more to help than anything. But the lawyer 'll skin both of us, and I won't have nothing to do with him. I 've always paid my just debts, and I 'll pay him when I can, but I can't now, and he knows it."

Ruth sat a moment without speaking. All that her father had been telling her was so unexpected that she scarcely knew what to say. She had felt for some time that he was troubled about money; but brought up as she had been in the little New England town, so far away from people, she had not grasped the seriousness of it all, and it had made but a vague impression upon her. Money had no special meaning for her, except as something her father occasionally received for his work, or gave to her to buy some little thing at the village store. There was very little of it seen on

the Petersham farm. To be sure, the young man who had had his mare shod paid in silver shillings, but aside from that Ruth had seen nothing of the kind for many a day. After thinking a few minutes, she said to her father gently, —

"Could n't I earn some money for you, father? I 'm strong, and can work."

"Ye 're a dear good girl, as I 've told ye before," said her father, affectionately, "but I need ye to help me here. No, Ruth, I 'll go on as I have done, and I 'll take care of ye a spell yet."

"Father," said Ruth, suddenly, "why did you send Jimmy off in such a hurry? I don't like to have him go to fighting."

"I 'd two or three reasons for sending him, Ruth. Jimmy 's my boy and your brother, but he 's shiftless and lazy, and I want to make a man of him. Don't fret about him. It 'll do him good. Then it 's his duty to fight for his rights, and I could n't leave ye with nobody but him to look after ye. Besides this, he 'll be cared for, and it 'll be one less mouth to feed. I 'm feeling a little tired to-night and guess I 'll go to bed early. My head feels kind of dizzy with all them things coming out of it, but it 's done me a deal of good, and God knows what I 'd do without ye, Ruth dear."

"You do look pale and tired, father," said Ruth, shaking her head. "I 'll get your bed ready for you and put the candle in your room." She ran out of the kitchen. When she was gone, Deacon Brown passed his hand over his face and eyes again, down into his pocket, and drew out William Perry's letter. He held it before the candle and tried to read it, but his eyes seemed dim, and he snuffed the candle. Then he passed his hand over his eyes again, and said, —

"Strange, I can't seem to read it. My head ain't feeling jest right, but I guess it 'll pass off. How my hand trembles! Well, I 'll go to bed, and won't tell Ruth, for it 'll worry her."

He got up and his legs gave way under him and he sank back again. Just then Ruth came into the room.

"Your bed 's all ready, father," she said. Then looking at him anxiously, she went on, —

"You 're not well, and you must rest. Stay in bed in the morning and I 'll bring in your breakfast. Do you want me to help you?"

"I do feel kind of queer, that 's a fact," said her father, getting up with an effort, "but I 'll be all right in the morning. Good-night."

When Deacon Brown had gone, Ruth went out to the shed door and looked across to the barn,

then up and down the narrow road. She did not know what she could do to save her father, but she felt that she must do something, and that quickly, for she saw clearly that the strain was breaking him down, and that it would soon be too late. She wondered what she could do. The stars were shining bright in the September sky, and she crossed the road to the stone wall and leaned against it. A whip-poor-will was singing down by the brook below the mowing, clear and piercing through the night air. Ruth had always loved the note before, but now it grated on her ears, and sounded like a note of warning. If only Abe Morse were at home she would go to him, but she knew that he and Jimmy must be far over the hills toward Pelham by this time, and she was in despair. It was Wednesday, and her father had told her that he must have the money by Friday. Suddenly an idea struck her. If she could only find that young gentleman who had given her father those silver shillings, she was sure he would help her. He had seemed so cheerful and bright and kind-hearted when he had spoken to her. He had told her that he lived in Boston, although not his name, but she would know him were she to see him. She would ask her father to let her go to Boston, and she would

try to find him. All these thoughts passed through her mind rapidly, and as rapidly others came, and she saw how impossible it would all be, and that she could not leave her father alone, especially when he was so careworn and worried. At last, tired and discouraged, she went back to the house, locked the shed door, and crept quietly up to her room. She set the candle down on the table and looked about. On the mantel was a picture of her mother; on the table by her a Bible and a book of poetry which her father had given her when she was a little girl. She sighed, and the tears came to her eyes.

"I have n't anything that I can get money for," she thought, as she raised the Bible and opened it. She read her chapter, as was her custom; kneeled down before the chair and prayed; then undressed and went to bed.

As she lay there she could hear the note of the whip-poor-will down in the valley. At last it grew fainter and fainter, until it died away entirely, and Ruth was asleep, dreaming of her father.

CHAPTER IX.

NOT long after Jerry Piper left William Perry in his office, a young man burst in on him with a cheerful good-morning, and took him by the hand. It was Fisher Ames, his handsome face dimpled with a bright smile, and his full, deep eyes wearing an expression of intellect and honest good nature. At this time Fisher Ames was in his twenty-ninth year, and his erect, graceful figure, his massive forehead, and clean-cut features betrayed youthful activity of body and mind. He was already becoming famous both at the bar and in the forum, and it was apparent to those who knew him that his career was but beginning, and that with longer life he was destined to be a leader among his fellows.

"Good-morning," said Perry, in answer to Ames' salutation. "You 've just missed your old friend Jerry. I congratulate you on him. He 's a beautiful specimen of our enfranchised people," and he laughed.

"He 's an old rascal, I 've no doubt," answered Ames, pleasantly, "but I imagine that his claim is a just one, and in these days we can't afford to look beyond that. He certainly is a remarkable character."

"How long has he been your client?"

"Only a short time. I have had but one matter of his, and although he appeared very careful, and a little over-anxious, I found nothing about him which warranted me in refusing to accept his case. He is a usurer, and I should say that his appearance indicated descent from a certain lost tribe; but as I have said, we can't draw too fine a line in these days. If debtors refuse to pay their just debts, creditors must be protected, and the law allowed to act."

"Very true," answered Perry, his face taking on a more serious expression. "Very true, Ames, but I cannot go to the extreme that you do. While I see clearly that government needs funds and that taxation is its only resource, yet the drain upon the farmers, in their present condition, is more than they can bear. I ran across a case out west that seems to me in point. A man assured me that in the old days he could live comfortably on forty pounds a year. Now his taxes amount to more than two hundred dollars. How can we expect

such a one to live and not get into debt? To be sure the creditors must be permitted to collect their just claims, but is there not something radically wrong that should be righted?"

"Undoubtedly, Perry, there are two sides to the question, and I am not one to be blind to the fact. But our government must be supported, and its principles maintained, even at the cost of some suffering. This rebellion is guided by the hand of an unscrupulous mountebank, who was one of Gates's Newburgh rioters, and who will prevent the federation if he can do so. We all suffer in a degree; and although the agricultural districts are especially unfortunate in this instance, yet they should see that their salvation, as well as that of the rest of us, lies in strict obedience to the laws, and the suppression of Shays and his villanous followers."

Perry shook his head and smiled.

"I see that you take an extreme view," he said, "but I cannot agree with you entirely. I do, of course, admit that creditors should be satisfied, but I think that under the circumstances there should be an adjustment possible between debtor and creditor. It is so very apparent that it is impossible for the people to meet their obligations, that it would be a benefit to both parties. Take our client as an example. Do you think he would

suffer seriously were he to compromise with his debtor? I only mention this as a possibility. I have no doubt that his claim is just and should be pushed to the end, but there are many instances where this is not the case."

"Your example is not a good one," said Ames. "Piper is a professional money-lender, not a merchant or the government. You may find that he is not honest, in which case throw him over. But I was speaking of the needs of government and the *bona fide* claims of respectable citizens. The fact is that the farmers don't want federation, and they are exaggerating their troubles to incite rebellion. It will be short-lived, though."

"I hope so on all accounts," answered Perry, "and that reminds me. When do you and Otis join General Shepard? The Supreme Court meets in Springfield next week, and then you 'll have a chance of meeting my friend Captain Shays!"

"We start by the end of the present week. I 'm taking this for a holiday, for I don't anticipate very serious fighting. When do you leave?"

"To-morrow. I 'm going first to Worcester, then on through Petersham, where I will look up this defendant, and see what I can do with him. Then I shall push on to Springfield in time for the opening of the session."

"Won't you spend to-night with me in Dedham, and start from there in the morning? It would give me much pleasure, and might refresh you a bit. You 've been working steadily of late, and a quiet afternoon and evening will do you good."

"Thank you very much. I 've a few odds and ends to attend to, and when I have finished I 'll go home and get ready, and ride out. If you can wait until one o'clock, I will go with you."

"I 'll wait with pleasure. Meet me at Concert Hall at one, and we 'll drink a glass of punch and start from there. *Au revoir.* At one then."

It was nearly noon when Perry left his office on King Street and went to his rooms on Clark Square. He made his preparations hastily, and just as it was striking one, rode up Hanover Street to Concert Hall, where Ames was in waiting for him. They drank their punch, mounted their horses, and soon passed through Marlborough and Orange Streets, and out over Dorchester Neck.

"If it had n't been for your kind invitation," said Perry, as they rode along the Neck, examining the remains of the fortifications, and the marks of the British cannon-balls, "I 'd have gone by the way of the new Charlestown bridge built last June. It 's a wonderful structure, Ames. I came over it on my way home last week."

"It's a great convenience, and I 'm surprised that they have n't finished it sooner," answered Ames. "For me, of course it's no great convenience, for this road is quite direct to Dedham. But for those going west it 's a great saving of time. Besides, I never tire of the views one gets going this way. See the light over the bay and the Heights, and then off toward Squantum and Milton. There 's nothing equal to it."

"If you 're more fond of the sea and its shore than the woods and hills, yes. I can't say that I enjoy this part of the ride as much as that further on. But even that, beautiful as it is, does not appeal to me as do the hills and rolling plains of Worcester and Berkshire. But I agree that this is most lovely."

For some time after this short conversation they cantered along without speaking, until they descended the hill and crossed the bridge into Milton. As they were ascending the incline on the opposite side of the Neponset River, Perry, who had seemed wrapped in thought for some time, suddenly burst into song, —

"The dairy-maid was shy she said,
And did n't want to kiss me,
But when I 'm gone, she 'll be forlorn,
And I am sure she 'll miss me."

Ames looked at him and burst into a fit of laughter.

"For Heaven's sake, Perry," he said, "whatever put that old college song into your head? Have you been making love to some fair damsel on your recent expedition? I haven't heard it for ten years."

"Nor I, either," said Perry, laughing also, "until I sang it on leaving Petersham last week. Don't ask too many questions. She had red hair, and a bristling ogre for a father!"

"Then I've hit it. Now I see, Perry, why your sympathies are so much aroused in favor of the agricultural classes, and I've been most indiscreet. But the fact is, I never suspected it." He threw back his head and laughed again.

"And pray why shouldn't I fall in love with a dairy-maid?" asked Perry, with mock seriousness. "You and that old ogre have keen perceptions, Ames, for I think that he, too, suspected me. But I'll be careful that you don't see her, for it might cause jealousy in Dedham."

They both laughed, and whipping up their horses passed round the old road over Brush Hill to Fowl Meadows. Leaving the great Blue Hill on the left, they turned over Hubbard's bridge toward Dedham. It was a warm afternoon, and they

were glad to get under the shade of the trees, through which wound the road beyond the meadows toward the village.

"You 'd hardly think that this quiet town was tinctured with rebellion, Perry," said Ames, as they passed up the street by the meeting-house, "but such is the case, nevertheless. The would-be rebels have already had their meetings, and they have petitioned the General Court to abolish the Court of Common Pleas, annihilate us poor lawyers, and reduce the salaries of public officials. But we've had no disturbances as yet, and I 'm quite sure that we shall have none here. There 's my office," he went on, pointing to a window they were passing. "They have n't sacked it yet. Do you know that I prefer this to King Street? Not that the income from it is large, but I have time to think and write and read. I have tried in a modest way to convince our people that they are mistaken in their opinions of government, and that we are moving on the right lines. Unfortunately some of them don't stop to think, but plunge headlong into the abyss of Anarchy."

"What do you think will be the outcome of all this agitation?" asked Perry, as of one to whose opinion he gave great weight.

"The outcome is in no way in doubt," answered

Ames, with more warmth than he had hitherto shown. "This rebellion will be put down; the States will be united; the laws will be obeyed; and then we shall have such a government as shall be everlasting, and there shall spring from it a paradise among nations. God knows that we've not passed through all these years of strife to see our hopes wrecked on the shoals of Anarchy. No, Perry. This storm will blow past us, and the sun will shine the brighter after it."

"I believe you, Ames. Yet I cannot see clearly how the people can live until that happy time arrives. They cannot live without food and raiment, and food and raiment do not come unbidden."

"But they will come the sooner with peace and good government. We are but feeling the natural reaction of the war, and it was to be expected. We are still in Chaos, and our Creation will not be complete until the Constitution is perfected, and the laws adjusted. Then will come the federation of States; the cementing together of all these great English-speaking free commonwealths; and the cement that holds them together will be the federal Constitution, which will grow harder and firmer as years go on, until like adamant it will be wellnigh indestructible."

They were now approaching the little old wooden house where Fisher Ames was born, and where his mother lived.

"Here we are," he said with a bright smile. "For the rest of the day let's put aside politics, and I'll show you about the farm. We must not pollute this sweet autumn air with talk of anarchy and rebellion."

CHAPTER X.

AFTER breakfast on the following morning, William Perry mounted his horse and bade farewell to his host.

"Beware the dairy-maid, Perry," called Ames, as William rode away toward the highway. He answered with a laugh, and was soon out of sight on his way to Worcester.

William Perry was about four years Fisher Ames' junior, but the difference in their ages seemed much greater, for Ames was of maturer mind, and had developed much under the severe schooling he had experienced since he entered Harvard College at twelve years of age. Though bright, witty, and affable, he was of a thoughtful, serious disposition. Perry was also a student, a young man of marked promise, of firm convictions, and sound judgment. Yet he had another and more frivolous side to his character, as could be well seen by those whom he met as he passed through Natick and on toward Worcester, hum-

ming, singing, and whistling like a school-boy. When he was away from the cares of his profession, he was bubbling over with the mirth and careless swing of youth, and it would have occurred to no one that he had ever anything to burden his mind other than the passing pleasures of the moment.

As he neared Worcester, he noticed from time to time little groups of men, some walking along the highway toward the west, others gathered under the shade of the trees, talking earnestly. At first it did not occur to him who these men were, but it finally came to him that they were recruits going to join Shays in the west.

Perry was not a coward. On the contrary, he was rather reckless, and feared no one. But he had, nevertheless, thought it prudent to put on his homespun costume before leaving Dedham, for it was important that he should reach his destination without delay, as he had given himself none too much time, and recent occurrences, coupled with the recollection of his meeting with Shays between Barre and Princeton, had convinced him that the less cause he gave the people for suspecting his calling and destination, the less chance there would be of his being detained and questioned. As he rode past the groups of people, he was sure that

he had acted wisely, for they simply cast side glances at him, and then resumed their conversation. So it was that he rode into Worcester and up to the inn where he had passed the night not many days before. The keeper recognized him, and saluted him civilly.

"You 're a great traveller, sir," said the host, as Perry entered the tap-room. "I wish there were more like you. Business is bad, sir, very bad, and many don't pay at all. There 's a hard lot passing through here now. They tell me that some of 'em have broken gaol, and that others are only fit to be there. How are matters in Boston, sir?"

"Comparatively quiet. There is very little disturbance as yet in the eastern counties, although Bristol and Middlesex show signs of giving government trouble, and a few of the towns of Norfolk contain those who are discontented. But on the whole we 've not much to fear. Has our friend Captain Shays been here lately? He must be near here now."

"So near, sir, that I 'd not be surprised at a visit from him at any moment. He 's flying around the country like a mad man, and from what the frequenters of my tap-room say, I should think he was gathering quite a following from among the

farmers. It 's a shame, sir, that he 's allowed to be at large."

"It won't be for long, for General Shepard will be on hand to meet him at Springfield, and I doubt if he 'll escape from him. I wish that the farmers would keep out of this. They 're but digging their own graves. I 'm sure that patience is all that is needed."

"Who needs patience?" said the voice of a man behind him, entering the door.

Perry turned quickly and saw before him a man dressed in an old continental uniform; his legs spread apart, and his hands on his hips. The three-cornered hat was tipped forward, shading his heavy features, and for a moment the young man did not recognize him. As he threw back his head, however, William noticed who it was, and an expression of disgust came over his face as he answered, —

"*I* need patience sometimes, Captain Shays, and especially when I 'm interrupted in a conversation with a friend. Wait until you 're addressed before you ask questions."

Shays looked at him with an amused smile. Then he lounged forward, and stopping in the middle of the room, said, examining Perry closely, —

"Whew! 'Pon my sword it 's my young friend. How d' ye do, Mr. Lawyer? We 've great luck

in meeting, ain't we? This *is* an unexpected pleasure."

"Speak for yourself, Captain Shays," replied Perry, returning his gaze. "I can't say that it is entirely unexpected to me. I knew you were skulking round here somewhere. Nor can I say that it 's any great pleasure. I was perfectly satisfied before you appeared."

"You don't say so," said Shays, bowing. "But I see you 've taken my advice, even if you don't like my company. A wise move, sir, to put on them clothes," and he burst out into a hoarse laugh. "Let 's christen 'em in a glass of punch, Mr. Lawyer. Our host here is very obliging, and he 'll serve us at once."

The keeper was about to pour out the punch when Perry stopped him.

"One moment," he said, looking calmly at Shays. "There are two reasons why he will not serve that punch, Captain Daniel Shays, and if you 'll listen quietly I 'll tell you what they are. First, I 'll not drink with you; second, you have n't any intention of paying for it. There 's one thing, Captain Shays, that I wish you to understand. I 'm a college-bred lawyer." The other smiled contemptuously. "Yes, sir, I 'm a college-bred lawyer, who is on his way to the opening of the

Supreme Court in Springfield. I 'm aware of the fact that you have a dislike for men of my profession, and that you hold them in contempt; but before you attempt any of your bullying here, I wish to give you a piece of information, together with some good advice. I followed yours; do as I 've done. I entered college at the age of fourteen and left it when I was eighteen. While there I was particularly interested in athletic sports, and boxed, lifted, fenced, wrestled, and shot the pistol. After my graduation, there was given in Boston an exhibition which included tests of skill with the sword and pistol, and trials of strength. Of eighty-two youths who contested, I was first in everything, and I 've gained rather than lost in efficiency during the last seven years. This is the information I wished to give you. Now for the advice. Unless you have friends within hailing distance I advise you to get out of that door before I put you out. Ah! you prefer the rapier? Mine 's here," he went on, putting his hand to his side. "I 'm quite willing you should remain on those terms." Shays looked at him a moment, then laughed a little nervously and said, —

"I don't want to quarrel with you, Mr. Lawyer. I came in here to get a drink, for I knew it was a quiet place. You talk mighty big, and if I had

time I 'd have a bout with ye, but I ain't, so I 'll take my punch and be moving on."

"And you'll pay for it before you go, too," Perry answered, stepping between him and the keeper.

"Damn it, who ever said I was n't going to pay for it but you?" said Shays, stopping short and looking at him with an ugly expression. "Do ye think I 'm to be browbeaten by such as you? Get out of my way," and he tried to pass.

"Captain Shays," said William, quietly holding his ground, "I 've given you some good advice, and you 'd better take it. You can pass and take your punch, and I 'll go over to the door and wait until you are ready to go."

Perry was starting across the room when he was surprised to see two men entering the doorway. They were evidently in a great hurry, and out of breath. Seeing Shays, one of them called out, —

"Come, cap'n, be quick. There 's trouble in the tavern up at the other end of the town, and if ye don't come quick there 'll be broken heads."

"What 's the matter, Day?" said the captain, about to raise the glass to his lips. "Have those damned rascals got full of ale again?"

"They have, cap'n, and we ought to be on the march now, for I 've heard this afternoon that

that old rat Shepard is trying to get the militia into Springfield ahead of us."

"Well, my friend Mr. Lawyer," said Shays, "I can't wait to attend to you now, for I 've more important business. But we 've been in the habit of meeting lately, so I guess we 'll do it again before long. The next time I may not be quite so pleasant. Good-night. Sorry you would n't join me in the punch."

Perry deigned no answer, but turning his back on him, walked up to where the keeper was standing with an anxious expression.

"Cheer up, my man," he said, with a reassuring laugh. "He 's well out of the way now, and won't trouble you again. That 's the only way to handle such a man as he is, for any one can see that he is a bully, and when it comes to real fighting he 'll prove a coward, and will run as fast as any of them. I 've no doubt that he 'd like to get a chance at me, but he 'll be out of the way by morning, so I 'll trouble you to get me supper, and then I 'll go to bed."

"All right, sir, I 'll get it ready. I 'm obliged to you for protecting my rights, but I hope, sir, he won't come back here. He 's a reckless fellow, and there 's no telling what he 'd do."

"Give yourself no anxiety. He 's got all he can

attend to, to keep his followers in order, and he wants to get to Springfield before Shepard. It 's a shame that decent, well-meaning men join him and his mob, but they 're desperate, and I suppose don't know what to do. I 'm sorry, though, that you should have been startled by him. As for myself, I have n't the least anxiety. He 'll be well on his way by to-morrow, and only he and one or two others know me, and they 're in a hurry. If it was n't for that they might lie in wait for me, and give me some annoyance; but under the circumstances, I 'll go ahead unconcerned."

"I 'll be glad when this is all over," said the keeper, with a sigh, as he was laying the table. "If it was known that he 'd been here to-night I would n't have a decent customer for a month. They 're all in terror of him, sir, and you 're the first that I 've known to dare to answer him. He and his men have been having pretty much their own way about here for some time, and the Lord be praised that they 're off to-night. If they don't come back and burn my house first, I 'll be thankful."

Perry smiled, and ate his supper. When he had finished he lighted a pipe and went outside the door to breathe the fresh air. He strolled down toward the street, and was about to return, when

he noticed a red light in the sky over the north-western part of the town. At first he thought it some reflection, but in a moment he saw that it grew brighter, and danced in the heavens. Then a tongue of flame shot up into the air, and almost at the same instant he heard near him a cry of fire, then another, and still another, until finally the whole town seemed to be awakened, and rushing in the direction of the conflagration. By this time the bells in the church steeple were ringing the alarm, and the whole town was in an uproar. Perry watched a moment, then turned, ran into the house, and taking his hat called the keeper:

"The town 's on fire. Come quick and help catch those rascals, for it 's their work."

"I can't leave my house alone, sir, on such a night as this," answered the keeper, in despair.

"Come out and tell me where you think it is. You can judge better than I can."

The keeper hesitated, but went out and looked in the direction of the fire.

"It 's beyond the town, sir, and it 's a good sign that it is. I know from the direction that it 's on Blodget's farm, and from the height of the flames it must be his barn. It 's no use going after 'em, sir, for it 's a good two mile away, and they 're more than double that from here before now. Let

'em go, for God's sake. That 's the third barn in as many weeks."

"Well, I guess you 're right," answered Perry, a little reluctantly. "It seems to be subsiding now, and I 've got a long journey to-morrow, so good-night, and call me at sunrise."

With that he re-entered the house and went to bed.

CHAPTER XI.

AS Perry rode out of Worcester the following morning, he did not feel at all sure that his trip to Petersham would be a pleasant one, for notwithstanding his assurances to the keeper the night before, he knew very well that Shays would not forget him, and would lose no opportunity of repaying him for his words and actions in the tavern. That Shays was a coward was distinctly proved, but Perry was also aware that he was revengeful, and that he would probably speak to his sympathizers along the road with hopes of getting some one to do the work which he did not have the time to do himself. These thoughts gave him little anxiety, however, and only served to make him watchful for the first few miles, and then he burst out into song again, and before he had rounded Mount Wachusett had forgotten all about Shays and his henchmen. As the first glimpse of Monadnock met his eyes, he began to

think of his errand to Petersham, and how he should go about it.

"I can ask that old pirate," he thought, "or perhaps it would be better to inquire of his fair daughter," he went on with a laugh. "But better still will be to find out at the tavern, for I 've got to spend the night there." He again relapsed into humming, and for some time seemed absorbed in thought. Finally these thoughts passed through his mind in rapid succession.

"I wish that old miser Piper was in Hades. It 's probably some poor hard-working farmer he 's after, and I don't like the business. But Ames is not a man to undertake anything unfair, so I 'll go ahead. It 'll help me if it 's known that he 's confided his matters to me, and I can't afford to be too sensitive. What 's that church on the hill? Ah! Rutland. Well, it is n't far to Barre now, and I 'll have to be on the lookout there. My old friends may recognize me if they have n't joined their Daniel."

He went on across the valley, keeping a little more careful watch, for the woods were thick, and he did not wish to be caught unawares. He met a number of people, some of whom were evidently on Shays' trail; but as he always bowed with a pleasant good-day, they passed on without pay-

ing him any particular attention. At last he reached the ford over the river, where he dismounted and sat down on a stone, holding the bridle while his horse drank. He had sat musing for a few moments when he thought he heard horses galloping up the road in the direction from which he had just come. He listened a minute longer, then got up slowly, mounted his horse, and began fording the stream. The sound of the galloping came nearer, and just as he reached the opposite bank he turned and saw three horsemen approaching the other side of the river. He was about to continue his journey when he heard one of the men calling, —

"Say, Mr. Lawyer, we almost missed ye, did n't we? The cap'n would like to meet ye again, and he 's sent us to look ye up. Jest wait a minute until we cross."

As Perry wheeled round he thought he recognized two of the men as those who had called Shays away from the inn in Worcester. After examining them a moment, he called back, —

"What does Captain Shays want of me? I thought he had enough last night; but if he is n't satisfied I 'll be happy to meet him in Springfield. I 'm in a hurry now, so I can't stop to speak to you."

"I rather guess you 'll stop, Mr. Lawyer," said the man, drawing his pistol, and aiming it at Perry across the stream, which at this point was only a few rods wide, and shallow. "He 's kind of tetchy, Cap'n Shays is, and he feels a little hurt at the way ye spoke to him last night, and I guess he 'd like to speak to ye himself. Jest wait where you are until we ford the river."

"I 'll wait where I am, and you 'll have a hard job reaching me," said Perry, drawing his pistol like a flash, and covering the man with it. "What button would you like to have me mutilate on that pea-green coat of yours? I advise you, my friend, to lower that pistol, and ride away to your captain. Otherwise, you may find it difficult."

The other laughed and said, —

"I guess three of us can catch one, so don't be foolish."

"There was an old Roman who kept off more than three," said Perry, still covering the man, "and they were n't such damned rascals as you are, either. Fire away, if you want to," he went on, noticing the man's high and unsteady aim. "I 'm perfectly willing. But mind what I say. If you do and miss me, just say a little prayer, for you 'll need it."

"I 'm sorry, Mr. Lawyer, to have to do it, but

my order is to bring ye to the cap'n, and if I can't get ye no other way, to jest kind of calm ye down with a bullet. So put down your pistol."

"I 'll put you down, you scoundrel," said Perry, taking a good sight and pulling the trigger.

The pistol dropped from the man's hand and his arm fell to his side helpless.

"He 's hit me, boys," he groaned; "shoot him quick, and then get across. I 'll slip off and bathe my hand."

In the mean time Perry had drawn his fresh pistol and covered one of the other men. The next moment there were two reports, and two bullets whizzed by his head in rather uncomfortable proximity. He waited a minute and then called out: —

"I don't want to take any unfair advantage, but I guess I 'll just put a ball through your shoulder. There," he said, as he pulled the trigger, and the man, with a scream, put his hand up to his collar-bone, "now you are at liberty to move on. I 'm sorry to have inconvenienced you two gentlemen, and to have caused your friend to beat a retreat, but with a little care you 'll be all right in a few days. I 'm afraid Captain Shays did n't inform you of what I told him last night. If he had you 'd have been more careful. Feeling

a little better now? Well, good-day. The next time I have so good a chance I 'll take better advantage of it."

With a laugh he turned his horse about and galloped away up the road toward Barre.

"They could n't have hit the side of a barn," he thought, as he walked his horse up the steep pitch leading into the town. "Of course they might have touched me by mistake, but from the way they held their pistols I could see there was no danger. It is getting rather disagreeable though, and I 'll be glad when I get among civilized people. Here I am in the town. I 'll get a bite and rest an hour, and then move on to Petersham. I 've winged those two vultures, and they won't trouble any one to-day, and they can't get word to Shays in time for a new departure. The fellow in the tavern here is all right, so I can rest quietly."

An hour later he was on his way to Petersham. The afternoon was bright and cool, and as he jogged along the sandy road he looked over the many-colored rolling country to the southeast, where the round summit of Wachusett stood out against the clear autumn sky. Perry wondered what mysteries were hidden in the shadows of those valleys, which seemed so peaceful as his

gaze wandered over them from hill to hill. He could hear no sound save the soughing of the wind through the pines, and no living object was in sight. And still, he knew there were people there with their joys and their sorrows. What a small and insignificant thing man is! Then he smiled, for these thoughts seemed strange to him.

"The first thing I know I 'll be becoming a philosopher, and I can't imagine anything more disagreeable. I must come down from my flight of fancy and think about my plan of action when I reach the end of my day's journey." Then speaking aloud to the mare, he said, "Well, Molly, are you getting tired, old girl? We have n't much farther to go to-night. There 's Monadnock, and to the left the steeple of Petersham meetinghouse. Steady, girl, down this hill, it 's steep."

He wound up round the pitch beyond the brook, and was soon going out from under the elms down the ledge to the tavern. The sun was setting over the village two miles to the west when he stopped before the door of the inn, a peculiar structure composed of two two-story hip-roofed houses joined together by a long shed. In one part was the store, about which were gathered several of the townspeople, discussing the news. But Perry was too

tired to pay much attention to them; so, dismounting, he secured a room, and then strolled out into the night air.

"This seems quiet enough, anyway," he muttered as he looked up and down the road. Turning toward the house, he noticed inside the store a little knot of people standing about, talking.

"Perhaps I'll go in there and find out what I want to know." He crossed the road and went in. The men stopped their conversation and looked askance at him. Seeing their attitude he said pleasantly, —

"Good-evening, gentlemen. I've just arrived, and have come in to ask you where I can find one Isaac Brown. I want to see him on business, and of course you know him."

"He's probably up to the house now. He don't stay down to the shop after dark," answered one of the men, rather shortly.

"Where is his house, if you please, sir?"

"Jest up beyond here up the straight road. First house."

Perry's expression changed.

"Why, that's where the blacksmith lives," he said in surprise. "You don't tell me that this Mr. Brown is the blacksmith?"

"Well, why should n't he be? Of course he's

the blacksmith, and his father and grandfather was afore him," said the man.

"Thank you," stammered William, as he went out onto the road again. "This is queer," he mused, after he had closed the door behind him. "I never suspected this revelation. I should have said that this man was as well-to-do as any one I met on my recent trip, and I 'm completely taken by surprise. Besides, I 'm really almost afraid to approach the old pirate. Well, I 'll wait until morning anyway, and think it over, and perhaps he 'll pay without a murmur, in which case I 'll have saved a good deal of trouble by stopping here. I 'm pretty well used up after my day's experiences, and I 'll run out to the stable and see that Molly 's all right, and then go to bed."

As he was going to his room a little later, he thought: —

"Ames bade me beware the dairy-maid. I 'm inclined to think there was something prophetic in that warning, but that it should be applied to the father rather than the daughter. However, '*À demain*,' as the French say. I 'll wait until to-morrow and see what turns up."

CHAPTER XII.

DEACON BROWN and his daughter were seated in the kitchen eating their breakfast, as the sun was rising over the tree-tops of the grove beyond the pasture. The man's face was worn and tired, for he had slept but little of late, and had been far from well. He was looking out of the window with a weary expression in his eyes, and Ruth was watching him anxiously. He started to speak once or twice, but seemed undecided, and his eyes wandered again out toward the orchard. At last he said, without changing his position, and with hesitation, —

"It 's Friday, Ruth."

"I know it is, father," answered the girl, with an effort at cheerfulness, "and you 're feeling better, are n't you?"

He did not seem to notice her question.

"I ain't heard nothing more about them notes. They 're due to-day."

"Never mind about the notes, father," said Ruth, going round the table and putting her hand on his forehead. "Your head 's hot, and it all comes from your fretting so. You can't pay if you have n't got the money, and you 've promised me not to think about it. Eat your breakfast, and I 'll go down to the shop with you."

"It ain't so much their being able to make me pay, Ruth. But I 've always paid my debts, and I always will, if they 'll give me time. It ain't my fault."

"Of course it is n't, father. If they 'd been going to trouble you, you 'd have heard of it before now. Just sit there while I do my work, and then I 'll go with you and blow the bellows. I like to do it, and it is n't hard a bit."

Deacon Brown did not answer, but still sat gazing out of the window. At last he was roused by Ruth's speaking to him.

"Come, father," she said brightly, "here 's your hat and coat. Put 'em on and we 'll get to work."

He turned his head, and a faint smile came over his face.

"I never thought," he said with a sigh of resignation, "that I 'd ever be pulled round by a girl. But ye seem to be a running me now, Ruth, and for some reason I ain't able to gainsay ye. I 'll

go, ma'am. It 's time to be getting to work, and I dunno as it does any good to set here a worrying. Yes," he went on, answering her question of some moments before, "I 'm feeling a bit smarter to-day, but them queer feelings is in my head yet. I guess the air 'll do me good. Lock the shed and barn. I don't want 'em taking my property when I ain't here."

"They would n't do that, father. They have n't any right to. You 've been thinking too much, and you imagine all these things. Everything is safe, so come along."

Her father obeyed without further protest, and they walked down to the shop, and went silently to work. In truth, there was not much to be done, for the business of the forge had nearly died away, and Deacon Brown often sat for hours peering out of the window in rapt thought. When any one brought a horse to be shod, or a tire to be set, he would go about it in a half-hearted way, and when it was done, relapse into melancholy, and sit and sit, never speaking unless spoken to. Ruth watched him constantly, and tried to cheer him up, with but little success.

They had been in this position for half an hour or more, when Ruth suddenly turned her head toward the door and listened. She heard a foot-

step on the road, and instinctively she went to the door and looked out. She uttered a little exclamation of surprise, and withdrew into the shop again. Her father noticed it, and turning quickly said, with more animation than he had shown for some time past, —

"What is it, Ruth? Some one coming? Why, ye look nervous, girl."

He rose and started to go to the door, but before he reached it was met by William Perry, who was crossing the threshold, hat in hand. Deacon Brown drew back, and the furrows deepened and his mouth contracted.

"Good-morning, Mr. Brown, good-morning, ma'am," said Perry, bowing first to the deacon and then to Ruth. "I hope I 'm not disturbing you."

"Good-morning, sir," answered Brown, shortly, while Ruth dropped her eyes and courtesied. "Does your mare need shoeing again?"

"No, sir," said Perry, assuming a pleasant manner. "I 'm passing through here again on my way to Springfield."

"Going to the court, I suppose," said Brown, trying to control himself, for he knew the young man's profession. "It won't do ye no good. Dan Shays is going there too, and 'll shut 'em up, thank the Lord."

"I 'm sorry, Mr. Brown, that you feel so harshly toward us poor lawyers," said Perry, with a little laugh. "We 're much like other humans, and at present it seems to me that we have about as hard a time of it as any one. We have to bear the blame for all the ills that are being suffered, and I think unjustly."

Brown stared at him, and his face grew red as he answered vehemently, —

"What do ye suffer except what ye deserve? I know what ye lawyers are, and how ye make your money, and how ye spend it, while we poor country folks are starving. Don't come here to me, sir, to make any excuses. I 've got more 'n I can bear now, and be careful how ye talk to me, for my patience is about at an end."

He looked at Perry savagely, and then went on: "I 've had more 'n I can bear, I tell ye, and I don't want to be troubled with anything more."

Perry had expected something of this kind, and was therefore prepared to meet it.

"You are not quite fair, Mr. Brown," he said pleasantly. "Listen to me, sir, and I 'll prove to you that I 've also something to trouble me. I 've been educated as a lawyer, and I 've no other way of supporting myself than at the bar. Since I was a child I 've been alone, without parents or rela-

tions, and I 've had to depend upon my own efforts to secure an education, and my livelihood. You wish me to be deprived of my only means of supporting myself. Is that right? "

Deacon Brown still looked at him as before.

" That all sounds very pretty, sir, but it don't do me no good. Perhaps ye have worked hard, and perhaps ye don't know anything but your damnable business. So much less credit to ye, sir. Why don't ye give it up and take to some honest calling? A lawyer 's a lawyer, same as any other thief 's a thief, and that 's all to it."

Perry controlled himself, for he really began to feel angry.

" I see it 's no use trying to convince you, Mr. Brown, so I 'll come directly to the point without any further discussion. The truth is, sir, that I 've come to see you on a matter of business — "

He stopped short at the low cry from Ruth, and at the expression which came over her father's face. It grew pale as death, and his hands began to tremble as he stared into William's eyes.

" What business have ye with me, sir? " said the blacksmith, slowly, in a hoarse voice.

Perry made another effort and went on, —

" I wrote you a note a few days ago. My name is Perry."

Brown stared at him another moment, then the storm which had been pent up so long burst forth in all its fury. He clenched his great fists and raised them above his head. His face and arms grew red, and the veins swelled out on them. His eyes were bloodshot, and his voice trembled as he said, —

"Your name is Perry, and ye 're the one that wrote me about them notes, are ye? Get out of my shop before I strangle ye or put the red-hot iron on ye, ye rascally little thief! Away with ye! Do ye suppose I 'd pay ye the money even if I had it? No! No!" he roared, bringing his fists together with a loud report.

"Ah, father, father!" cried Ruth, coming up to him and taking his hands, "you 're not doing right to speak so and get so angry. The gentleman has said nothing hard to you."

"Leave me be, girl," he said, pushing her away. "I 've told ye that I could n't and would n't pay them notes, and I mean what I say."

"Mr. Brown —" began Perry.

"Away with ye quick, or I can't hold back," said the blacksmith, taking a step forward, and raising his fists again.

"Very well, sir," answered Perry, quietly, "I came here intending to find out just how this

matter stood — No, listen to me now, for I 've little more to say — I came here to see if I could not help you in some way to make a settlement of this case which would be satisfactory to both parties; but you have given me no chance to speak, and have done nothing but heap abuse upon me. You are a comparatively old man, and in the presence of your daughter, so I 'll not resent it otherwise than in what I shall say. I 'm sorry for you, Mr. Brown, as I am sorry for all those who are suffering under the burden of taxation and debt, and I therefore forgive your unjust censure of me and my profession. God knows that I would do anything in my power to assist you and others like you, and make it more easy for you to live. But neither I nor any one else can do aught so long as you and other farmers give yourselves up to your passions and prejudices, and follow the leadership of such men as Daniel Shays, who think of no one's good but their own. You refuse to let me speak of this claim against you. I 'll not do so then, but will let the law take its course, when, had you been a little more compromising and less bitter, you might have been saved this. I go to Springfield, and come back this way in about ten days. Because I feel sorry for you I promise you not to bring suit until I return to Boston. If you

change your mind before I pass through Petersham again, we can talk matters over then; if not, I must do as the law directs, and as is required of me by my client. Good-day, sir. Think of what I have said to you." He bowed stiffly, and passing out of the door walked quickly toward the tavern.

When he was gone, Deacon Brown sank heavily on the stool, and putting his arm on the bench laid his head upon it. Ruth went quickly up to him and took him by the shoulder.

"Father," she said, her eyes full of tears, "you did n't mean to do it, but you 've driven away the only friend we had. I 'm going up to the house now. Close the shop and come with me."

Deacon Brown raised his head and looked at her. His eyes were blood-shot and staring. Without a word he picked up his coat and hat, and followed her up over the mowing and into the shed. "You stay here, father. I 'm going out to the barn a minute. Bathe your head and lie down a spell. Promise me you won't go out till I come back."

"I 'm feeling kind of tired," said Brown. "Leave me a while, and I 'll rest."

Ruth put on her bonnet, and going out of the shed door, ran quickly across the fields in the direction of Petersham village.

CHAPTER XIII.

WILLIAM PERRY went quickly to the tavern and ordered his horse. For the first time in his life he felt excited, and for the first time the feeling of care and seriousness did not leave him as he mounted Molly and started round the bend of the road toward Petersham village. This whole affair had made a profound and lasting impression on him for many reasons. He had thought this blacksmith prosperous, and when he learned his mistake, when he saw how this man was suffering, a new picture of the condition of the people came up before him. He had been aware that there was much distress, but not that it was universal, and he had spoken of this man as an exception to the general rule. It now seemed to him that if Brown's case was as bad as it appeared, there must indeed be still more cause for grumbling than he had hitherto imagined.

Another thing that made him think was Ruth's careworn face. Since he saw her last her cheeks

had grown pale, her bright smile had been superseded by a sad one, and her large brown eyes had grown dull and listless. It was such a short time since he had heard her merry laugh that he could not quite understand whence the change in her came, for he saw clearly that her father's embarrassment could not be of recent beginning, and he thought that the daughter must have known of it for some time past. As he climbed the hill beyond the blacksmith shop, he pondered matters thus:

"It's too bad, but what can I do? He's unreasonable, like the rest of them. I was right when I told him that we lawyers had something to bear as well as other people! Were I to refuse all hard cases like his, how could I live? It's about all we have now."

He meditated a moment, then continued, —

"I've really no right to postpone action, and I don't know that Ames will approve. He made no mistake when he told me to beware the dairy-maid, for it was her appealing looks that decided me. If she had n't been there, I 'm afraid I 'd have done something rash, for the old rascal was really insulting."

He had now reached the top of the hill, and was beginning to descend toward the bridge by the dam and the saw-mill. On his right was a high

bank crowned by a thick woods, and he thought once or twice that he heard a crackling sound above him, and involuntarily his hand went to his pistol, for his experiences of the last two days had taught him caution. He had nearly reached the foot of the hill when he heard a louder noise than before, and turning quickly, he saw a young woman hurrying through the trees toward the road. He stopped short and lifted his hat. Before him stood Ruth Brown. For some moments neither spoke. Then Ruth raised her eyes and said hesitatingly, and with a gasp, —

"I knew you 'd have to pass this way, sir, and I 've run down to speak to you." Her eyes dropped again, and she waited.

"You really startled me, Miss Brown," answered Perry, with a smile. "You 're quite out of breath. Rest a moment, and I 'll dismount and let Molly feed by the roadside. There."

A minute later Ruth looked up again and said with appealing eyes, —

"I 've come to ask you not to be too hard on poor father, sir. He is n't well, and I don't think he meant to treat you as he did. He 's about broken-hearted."

Perry smiled, and tried to speak naturally as he answered, —

"Miss Brown, I know as well as you do how much your father is suffering, and I 'll try not to press him too hard. My duties are painful, and I fear that this is not appreciated. I 've promised to wait until my return. Is this not enough?"

"I 'm afraid not, sir. Supposing the man who lent him the money comes up here again? It would kill my father. I sometimes think his mind is going, and I want to help him before it 's too late. Is n't there anything I can do to get the money for him?"

Perry looked at her, and an expression of compassion came into his eyes as he replied, —

"He ought to be satisfied to have so brave a daughter as you are, Miss Brown. But three hundred dollars in these days are not easy to get, even for a hard-working man. But you need not worry about Piper. The notes are here," he went on, tapping his pocket, "and without them there is little danger of his coming here. I can advise you how to help your father, though. Try to make him see that I 'm not unjust, and make him speak with me when I come back."

Ruth shook her head sadly.

"It 's no use, sir. He 's made up his mind that he 's being robbed, and I 've tried to change him. It 's no use. Then you can do nothing for us?"

Perry hesitated. He saw before him this girl, so lonely, so troubled, and he did not know what to answer. She had come to him to ask his help, and his tender heart was touched. But what could he do? One of the leading members of the bar had confided to his care the interest of a client, and he must do his duty at whatever cost. For a while his eyes rested on the mill, and he thought. Then he turned and met those of the girl, and a feeling of indecision came over him.

"Does your father owe much besides this three hundred dollars?" he said, suddenly.

"The farm is mortgaged, sir, and must be paid next month."

"For how much?"

"Five hundred dollars, sir."

"And how much is the farm worth?"

"Father says it's worth eight hundred, sir."

Perry was silent again. The girl looked at him with wide-open eyes as if expecting him to speak. Finally he said, —

"Will you trust me, Miss Brown?"

"I 'll trust you, sir."

"Then listen carefully to what I tell you. I 'll write to my client to-night that these notes will be paid. Tell your father this. This will prevent any chance of his coming to you. I shall be back

here in less than two weeks unless Captain Shays succeeds in putting a bullet through me before then. Perhaps by that time something will occur to us, and we may be able then to make a settlement. In the mean while do what you can to quiet your father."

The tears came to Ruth's eyes, and Perry looked down toward the mill again.

"You are very, very kind," said the girl, going up to him and putting out her hand.

Perry took it, and said gently, —

"I wish I could do more for you, but even now I 'm taking a responsibility beyond what is my right."

"I thank you for it, and I know you 'll never repent it. As for father, I 'll try to make him see that it 's all right. I hope he 'll understand."

"Miss Brown," said Perry, abruptly, "you have changed much since I saw you a short time ago. Why is it?"

"It was only after you went away that he told me all his troubles. It has been very hard since then, and I 'm tired. I shall feel better now."

"Is your father in need of money now?"

"I 'm afraid he is, but he won't tell me, and says that it 's only the notes and mortgage that 's fretting him."

Perry hesitated again. Finally he said, rising and going up to the mare, which was browsing near by, —

"I must go now, for my time 's short. Keep up a brave heart until I come back, Miss Brown, and then I will do what I can for you."

He lifted his hat, vaulted into the saddle, and rode down the hill, over the bridge, and on toward the village.

Ruth stood looking after him until he had disappeared round the curve, then dropped on a stone, and covering her eyes with her hands, wept bitterly.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" she sobbed. "Father 'll never listen to him, and won't believe me. I 'll try my best, though," she went on, rising and climbing the bank toward the woods. "I 've been away too long already, and father 'll wonder where I am. I must hurry home." She walked rapidly under the trees, over the brook, and up the mowing toward the house. It was after ten o'clock now, and the day was very hot, and Ruth very tired. At last, exhausted, she went into the kitchen and called her father, —

"Father! Father! Where are you? I 've got good news for you."

There was no answer.

"He's down to the shop, I guess. I'll get dinner ready early, for I don't think he'll stop long to-day."

She went about her work with a lighter heart than she had felt for some time, although she could not explain to herself why it was, for she had really little hope of persuading her father. Yet she saw a ray of light, and thought that perhaps, after all, the sky would clear. When dinner time came she set the table, and then strolled out to the door to wait.

"He's late," she thought, not seeing him coming up the road or over the field. "I guess I'll run down and meet him. He can't be long now."

When she got about half-way down the mowing she stopped and waited again.

"He ought to be coming by this time. He's never as late as this," she thought.

She started on a run and was soon at the door of the smithy. It was locked. She hurried round to the window and looked in. The shop was empty, and she knew by the forge and the position of the hammer that her father had not been there. A sudden fright seized her, and she called out, —

"Father! Father! Where are you?"

Then she listened a moment, turned, and ran up

the hill toward the barn. Her heart was beating violently as she opened the barn-door and again called, —

"Father! come in, dinner 's ready."

There was no response save the chirp of the swallows sailing in and out above her. She went in and looked about. All at once she gave a great cry.

"The horse is gone, and the saddle and bridle. What 's he doing? Where 's he gone to?"

Suddenly she stopped and laughed nervously.

"It 's after me that he 's gone. Why did n't I think of it? I told him I 'd only be away a minute, and stayed over an hour. How silly I am. But I do feel so tired and weak. I 'll go into the house and wait and rest a bit. I ought n't to have stayed so long, and worried him."

She returned to the house, and sitting down by the kitchen-table rested her head on her arm.

"I knew he was kind and would try to help us, the first time I saw him," she said half aloud. "Perhaps the ride will do father good, and he may be more reasonable when he comes back."

She started at every sound, and finally got up and passed out of the door and looked up and down the road.

"He ought to be back before this, though," she

thought. "He knows I would n't stay after dinner-time."

Then she went into the kitchen again and fed the fire. The minutes and hours passed by, and still Ruth waited. At last she put on her bonnet, and walked rapidly down the hill toward the tavern.

CHAPTER XIV.

"SAMUEL," said Jerry Piper, looking up from between the leaves of a large volume he was examining carefully, "has the post come yet?"

There was a sudden snort from the front room, and the sound of the forelegs of a chair striking the floor. Then a thick voice answered, —

"Did you speak, Mr. Piper? I was thinking."

"You were asleep, you rascal," squeaked Piper, clapping the book together and rising. "Yes, I did speak. Has the post arrived?"

"No, it ain't, Mr. Piper."

"How do you know it has n't, Samuel, snoring away there like a volcano? They might rob me of everything if I was n't here to watch."

"I 've been watching carefully, Mr. Piper, and the post ain't come."

"Those notes of Brown's were due last Friday, Samuel, and I 've had no word about them. I 'll have to go up again if I don't hear soon. How

am I to leave if you don't mend your ways, Samuel? I can't trust you."

"Haven't you trusted me before, Mr. Piper, and have you ever lost by it?" answered his clerk, looking at him with his little red eyes.

"Yes, I have trusted you. But you're getting worse and worse, and these are dangerous times. I'll have to risk it, though, if I don't hear soon. I had no business to give the notes to that young lawyer. I'll wait until to-morrow, and if I don't hear by then, I'll go myself. Wake up, Samuel, for I'm going out for an hour."

He went back into the rear room, took his hat and cane, and hobbled out of the door and down the street. After he was gone, Samuel stretched himself, rubbed his eyes, got up and waddled to the door and watched his master until he turned the corner and was out of sight. Then he went back, sat down, and taking out a pipe and flint, began to smoke.

"I don't get no comfort these days," he muttered as he tipped back in his chair and blew the smoke from him. "He's getting awful particular lately. I'll make the most of this hour, anyway." He settled himself back and closed his eyes. He had scarcely done so, when he was roused by some one entering the door; and opening his eyes

quickly he saw before him a large man with bristling red beard and hair, and wild, staring eyes.

"Where 's Mr. Piper?" said the stranger, looking about the shop hurriedly.

"He 's just gone out, sir. I 'm his clerk, and can attend to all his business when he 's away. What is it?'

"I want to see Piper, I tell ye. When 'll he be back? Where 's he gone to?"

"In less than an hour. I don't know where he has gone to."

"He ain't gone out of town, has he?" asked the newcomer, eying Samuel suspiciously. "Be careful and tell the truth. I ain't taking no lies from no one to-day. He ain't gone to Petersham?"

Samuel bounded like a rubber ball.

"No, Mr. Brown, he ain't. He 'll be back soon, and he 's kind of expecting you, I guess. Jest take a chair," and he pushed forward one of the weary-looking pieces of furniture.

Deacon Brown covered him with his bloodshot eyes, and the furrows between them deepened.

"How 'd ye know who I was? Who told ye who I was?" he answered, going up to Samuel and clapping his big hand on the clerk's shoulder. "Tell me, quick, or I 'll shake the life out of ye."

"You told me yourself, sir," groaned the man, trying to pull away from the blacksmith's iron grasp.

"No, I did n't neither," answered Brown, giving him a shake. "Out with it, quick. I ain't taking no more nonsense from ye thieves down here."

"You said Petersham," gasped Samuel, in despair. "You 're pinching me, sir, and I 'm telling you the truth. I knew that Mr. Piper had only one customer in Petersham, and that he was expecting to hear about — "

"About what?" said Deacon Brown, giving him a more vigorous shake than before.

"About some business between you," whined the man.

"Oh!" said Brown, letting go the frightened Samuel's arm. "Well, I guess I 'll wait. Ye 're sure he 'll be back? If he ain't I 'll take it out of ye instead," and he sat down heavily, rolling his eyes about the room. Every few minutes he glanced at the door, and moved impatiently, muttering to himself. In the mean while Samuel had stolen quietly into the back room, whence he watched his visitor with apprehension. Deacon Brown had been seated with eyes and ears strained in the direction of the lane for nearly half an hour, when a shadow appeared outside the door, and the

next moment the lean, bent figure of the money-lender passed through it. The blacksmith jumped to his feet, and Jerry stopped short and stared at him. The next instant he recovered himself, and removing his hat, said in his shrill voice, —

"Good-morning, Mr. Brown. I 'm pleased to see you, and was thinking of going up to pay you a visit."

"Ye was, was ye?" answered Brown, with a scowl; "well, I guess it 's jest 's well ye did n't, for I ain't receiving company jest now. Your friend come and got off with a whole skin, more 's the pity. I come down to see ye about them notes. What are ye going to do about 'em?"

Piper looked up and raised his eyebrows with an expression of surprise.

"Ah, yes, I remember, Mr. Brown. They 're overdue, ain't they? I thought so, Mr. Brown, but I 've so much on my mind that I did n't remember."

"Ye did n't remember! Well, ye had 'em enough on your mind to send that 'ere sneaking little lawyer up after 'em. What are ye going to do about 'em?"

"I 'm very sorry, Mr. Brown," said Piper, persuasively, "to trouble you about this matter. I am pressed for money just now."

"Are ye," snarled Brown, looking down on him fiercely. "So 'm I, and if one of us has got to wait, I guess you 'll do 's well as me. Pressed for money! are ye? I ain't seen more 'n twenty-seven dollars for six months, and ye 'll have to wait whether ye like it or no. If ye send any more of them blood-suckers up to me, I 'll strangle 'em same 's I would a hen. Now jest tell me what ye intend doing."

Brown's manner was wild, and startled Jeremiah, but he kept the expression of surprise on his face, and answered with the same precision, —

"I 'm sorry, very sorry, sir, but I 'm a poor man, a very poor man, and I 've already extended your loan. I have to protect myself in these times, sir. I don't want to do anything hard, sir, so if you 'll — "

"Well, if I 'll what? Speak up quick. I ain't got no time to lose a-talking with ye."

"I was going to say," continued Piper, slowly, "that if you 'd give me a deed of the farm I 'd let the notes and interest go."

Deacon Brown clenched his fists, and his face grew purple as he went up to the cringing figure before him.

"Ye 'll — ye 'll do what?" he screamed, taking the now terrified man by the sleeve of his coat.

"Ye 'll do what, ye little withered up scorpion? Take a deed? Set down in that chair," he went on, swinging the money-lender round so that he spun like a top toward the chair in the corner, "I want to talk to ye, and I want ye to listen to me careful, and not answer me till I get through. Ye 've got two mortgages on my farm, and they don't come due till next month. Ye 've got them notes, and ye 've been a-trying to make me believe they 's for interest. Three hundred dollars' interest for two years on five hundred. Ye 're a damned thief, sir, and I ain't going to pay 'em."

The little man crouched back in his chair and tried to smile.

"You 're too hard on a poor man, Mr. Brown," he said, with a villanous look in his little black eyes. "I 've been very easy on you, very easy, and I 've already renewed the notes twice. My lawyer has 'em now, and I can't do anything more about 'em."

The blacksmith brought his fist down on the table, and watches, pistols, and Jerry, all bounded into the air simultaneously. A dark figure rolled by them and out into the lane. It was Samuel, whose nerves had given out, and who was making a wild plunge toward a haven of refuge. Then Deacon Brown stepped up to the trembling Piper,

and lifting him out of the chair with one hand, set him on his feet in front of him.

"Give me them notes," he bellowed, steadying the man by the shoulder.

"I can't, Mr. Brown. Mr. Perry's got 'em, and — "

"Then give me a writing saying they 're paid," said the other, still steadying him.

"I 'll tell you what I 'll do, Mr. Brown," said Jerry, looking up at him timidly. "If you 'll give me a new note for three hundred dollars, I 'll give you a receipt cancelling the old ones. This is very fair, very fair."

Brown let go his arm, and thought a moment; then he said, passing his hand over his face, —

"I dunno but that 'll do. Make up them papers, and I 'll set here while ye 're doing it."

With a sigh of relief Jerry ran into the back room, and was soon scratching vigorously with a pen. A little later he came back, and handed two papers to the blacksmith.

"There they are, sir," he said.

Deacon Brown took them, rubbed his eyes, and held them out at arms' length. Finally he got up, and going to the light by the door examined them again. Then he said, —

"Them seem all right. I'll put 'em in my pocket, and go along."

"Excuse me," said Piper, anxiously, "but I keep the note, you know. You have n't signed it."

"Ah! well, jest give me a pen. There, let 's see, 'due 22d October, 1786.' Well, I guess that 'll do," he went on, putting the receipt in his pocket. "By the time them 's due, Dan Shays 'll have cleaned out them courts, and we 'll have a new government. I 've handled ye kind of rough, Mr. Piper, but I ain't sure but I 'd 'a' killed ye if ye had n't done as I said. If ye or your lawyers ever come up to Petersham again, it 'll be the end of ye both. They 're waiting for ye along the road, and it ain't safe travelling jest now. Good-day, Mr. Piper, I 've got to git along now."

"Good-morning, sir," squeaked Piper, as Brown disappeared out of the door. Then he said, his little eyes snapping, "I 've got him now, sure. The receipt ain't any good, and I 've got his notes for six hundred dollars. He, he!" he laughed as he retired to the back room. Presently a round object appeared in the doorway.

"Is he gone?" said Samuel, out of breath.

"Yes, you coward. Where 've you been? I 'll get you out of the way if you have n't more courage."

"I was n't afraid, Mr. Piper," said Samuel, in an injured tone. "You said you wanted the post, and I 've been after it. There 's a letter for you."

Piper snatched the letter from him, looked it all over, and then broke it open. He glued his nose to it, and as he read, he began to twitch nervously. Then he read it again and smiled. Then he twitched again, and looking up, scratched the end of his nose.

"Samuel," he said, "here 's a letter from that young idiot, Perry, saying the notes are paid. That old Brown says they ain't, and won't be. What do you make out of it?"

Samuel blinked, adjusted his spectacles, took the letter and read it.

"It 's queer, sir," he said after he had finished. "If he 'd paid 'em, he would n't have made all this fuss."

"Samuel, I 'm going out again. I 'll have to get a new lawyer. This one 's cheating me."

He took his hat and cane, and was soon hobbling down the lane.

CHAPTER XV.

WILLIAM PERRY rode on up the hill toward Petersham village, absorbed in thought, and never turning his head until he reached the steep piece of road leading to the village green. Here he paused a minute and looked back over the tops of the pines across the valley, where he could see Deacon Brown's farm, near the summit of the opposite hill, the house and barn standing out clearly against the blue line of the pine-clad forest beyond. Perry had neither whistled nor sung that morning. Nor had he smiled, save when speaking to Ruth, and then only to give her courage, and make her believe that matters were more hopeful than they seemed. His accustomed mirth and buoyancy of spirits were for the time weighed down by his reflections on what he had learned in the last few hours, and it was with a heavy heart that he drank in the pretty picture before him.

"It 's too bad, too bad," he thought, as his eyes wandered over the forests and fields. "Why must these poor people be made to bear all the burdens? And yet," and he turned about and started up toward the meeting-house, "there are others who have to suffer. It 's all a question of degree. Those whose burdens are the heaviest sometimes bear them best."

As he passed the green, a few men were standing near by, talking. Otherwise all was quiet. Perry scarcely saw the town, so much was his mind occupied with his own thoughts. As he descended the road to the west, he began musing again: —

"I 'll write Piper to-night that the notes will be paid, and they will be if I have to do it myself. But the old miser will have to pay me a good round fee, and something will be saved from the wreck."

This last thought brought the trace of a smile, the first of that morning.

"That had n't occurred to me before," he went on. "Why should n't I take it out of him? It would be only justice."

For some time after this the road was rough and steep, and he was obliged to concentrate his attention on the mare.

"Steady, Molly, old girl. I 'll give you a good rest to-night. Here are two roads; which shall I take?" he pondered, stopping and looking about him. "I don't feel much like meeting any of those vagabonds to-day, and I guess I 'll go round over the hill to the left. It may be a hard way, but it 's less likely to be travelled by Master Shays' friends."

He was before long climbing a steep grass-grown bridle-path, over the western slope of a cone-shaped hill densely wooded. Below, to the right, he could see a valley dipping to the southwest, and he knew that if the path kept on, it must eventually bring him to the main road leading to New Salem, over which he had ridden on his return to Boston. It was getting toward noon, and the sun beat down upon him, so that when he saw the thick overhanging pines in front of him, he was glad that he had chosen the way, notwithstanding its difficulties. At last he began to descend again, and soon the highway came in sight through the trees below him. He was moving along quietly, thinking still of Ruth and her father, when his attention was attracted to voices not far from him, and apparently in front of him. He stopped and listened, and being protected by a bend in the bridle-path, and shaded by the overhanging branches,

he sat quietly and waited for the men to pass along the highway, for he was convinced that they were there, headed in the direction in which he intended going. Soon he could distinguish words and hear the voices plainly. One which he seemed to recognize was saying, —

"Yes, Abe, the other two, Day and Shaw, was hit; I was n't, 'cause I did n't like the looks of him, and got out. I ain't got no right to take risks, with others depending on me."

"That's the little fellow that ran away yesterday," thought Perry, as he peered down through the trees, "and the other don't look much more dangerous. I guess I 'll let 'em go on, though, for I don't care for their company. They might lead me into a trap."

He waited until the voices had died away, then spoke to Molly, and went out onto the road toward New Salem. Another descent brought him to a level plain, through which he continued to Millington village. Here he sought out the inn, ordered dinner, and secured a room.

It was now the middle of the afternoon, but Perry had been through a great deal lately, and his mare had had a hard road to travel, so he decided to remain quietly where he was until morning. Besides, he had the letter to write to Piper.

Whether it would ever reach its destination he did not know, for Shays' men had more than once anticipated the post, both in the hope of obtaining information of the movements of government, and to secure, if possible, such funds as would be likely to pass by this medium. There being no other means of reaching the money-lender, he determined to take the risk, and wrote as he had promised. His room was under the gable, facing the main thoroughfare; and as he sat writing he could hear the sound of the passers-by, and of the men who gathered about the corner as they talked, or called to each other and to those who went by. It was very warm, and he had opened the window to let in the cooling breeze that came down the valley over the plain, and when his letter was signed and sealed, he walked across the room and looked out of the window. He drew back suddenly, for directly below him were two men. One had his right hand bound with a cloth, and was speaking and gesticulating violently. The other was listening attentively. Perry knew them, and could hear their conversation.

"If you run again like that, you little coward," the older man was saying, "you ain't no good for a soldier, and that's what we want. The first time you seen any fighting, is it? Guess you 'll

see some before long, for there 's a company of militia about fifteen mile behind us, and if the rest don't move any faster than you and your friend, they 'll be a-top of us before we get out of this town. Wake up and get to work, or you can go back to Petersham."

"Petersham," thought Perry. "Upon my word, that brings it to me. That 's the boy who was helping old Brown when I had Molly shod. I should think he would be glad to be rid of him." He strained his ears and listened again. Jimmy was speaking, —

"I ain't used to these things, Cap'n Day," he said, "but I ain't afeared. The reason I did n't want to shoot again was that I kind of recognized the gentleman. He was in the shop a little while ago and had his horse shod, and I did n't want to hurt him."

Captain Day laughed.

"You 're good at making excuses, boy, but we 'll forgive ye this time, only don't do it again. What 's the news about this place? Got any recruits here?"

"There 's about twenty-five come in here this morning, and they 're waiting for ye, cap 'n."

"Jest you get on your horse and go and get 'em together and bring 'em down this way. We 'll go

on to Shutesbury this afternoon; and if them militia fellows don't move on as far as that to-day, we 'll spend the night there. When we 're gone, you and your friend go into the tavern here and wait, and as soon as them other chaps get here, find out what they 're going to do, and ride as fast as you can after us and let us know. No sneaking, now mind, or I 'll hand ye to Cap'n Shays, and he won't be as easy with ye as I 've been."

Jimmy mounted the old farm-horse which he had been holding by the bridle; and Perry could see him galloping up the road, his legs kicking out and his body bouncing forward in accompaniment to the horse's clumsy gait. Day watched him a moment with an amused smile, then mounted his own horse and followed leisurely.

"This is more like business," thought William, as he returned to the table and picked up his letter. "If the militia 's coming, my letter 'll be likely to get to Boston, and I can join them and reach Springfield with comparative comfort. I 'll run down and get the letter started, and then hurry back, for I don't want to lose the sight of Captain Day and his troops, and they won't be long coming."

He went out of the door, and in a few minutes

returned and took his post at the window, shaded by a hanging curtain. By this time the street was lined with people, — men, women, and children; and it was evident that with very few exceptions they were sympathizers of the rebels. Perry examined them as he sat, and his tender heart was touched.

"How poor and forlorn they do look!" he thought. "That old fellow with a gray beard, leaning on a cane, is half starved, and the old woman in the ragged shawl and big bonnet is n't much better. Even the young people seem worn and hungry. And this is our great, free, happy people; the offspring of our struggle for independence!"

Just then there was a bustling in the crowd, and all eyes were turned up the road in the direction of the sound of tramping horses.

"They 're coming. Hi!" screamed the old woman in the big bonnet into the old man's ear. "Ain't they jest splendid? And there 's our boy. Don't he look like General Washington on the horse? He 's going to fight for our rights. Hi! ain't he a soldier?"

The old man looked up the street, and nodded his head slowly backward and forward. The cavalcade had now come in sight, and Perry's face expanded, and for the first time that day a genu-

ine hearty laugh broke forth from him. He could not help it, much as the whole scene elicited his sympathies. There, coming down the street between the admiring and cheering citizens, was a mounted force of about twenty men, at their head the indomitable Captain Day, seated erect upon a dapple-gray horse, whose appearance indicated his recent employment in the tread-mill. His hoofs struck the ground with the force of Deacon Brown's hammer, and his head hung low. Captain Day himself wore an expression of grandeur and repose. He was dressed in the continental uniform of his rank, showing signs of many battles and much use. On his head was a venerable cocked hat, and in his bandaged hand he held his bare sabre straight up over his shoulder. He looked neither to right nor left, but rode bravely on, unaffected by the applause he was receiving.

Behind him came his gallant company. It was composed of old and young, short and long, thin and stout. Their costumes were of every kind and shade, from the simple gray homespun to the shabby blue velvet coat and scarlet small-clothes. Their arms were as varied as their clothes, some carrying sabres, others muskets, pistols, or rapiers, while one had no other weapon than a heavy oaken billet which he swung defiantly around his head.

But what amused Perry more than all these eccentricities was the horses and their riders. Like the men, their steeds were short and stout, long and lean. But, as if predestined by fate, the thin horses groaned under their portly burdens, and the thin sat upon the fat.

As the cavalcade passed the tavern, Captain Day wheeled suddenly about and shouted in a stentorian voice, —

"Halt! Attention!"

The order was obeyed, but not without some confusion, and danger to life and limb. The captain came near being trampled under foot, but at last the company righted itself, and Captain Day spoke.

"Soldiers," he said, "the hour is near when you 'll be called upon to fight for your rights and your homes."

There was a faint murmur of approval, and the captain looked them over, unmoved.

"Whoa, Bess. I was saying the time 's near for battle. Cap'n Shays is waiting for ye at Pelham. Be brave and follow me."

He wheeled his horse round, and, turning his head over his shoulder, shouted, —

"Forward, march!"

Again the order was obeyed, and again the cap-

tain's life was endangered, but finally the company moved, and before long was out of sight round the bend in the road toward Shutesbury.

Jimmy Brown and Abe Morse went into the tavern, the crowd gradually dispersed, and William Perry shut the window and sat down to think. The whole scene just witnessed reminded him of a comedy, but he saw behind it something that was very serious. Every soul who had watched this motley little band of volunteers march through and out of the village, excepting Perry himself, had believed that their commander, that mountebank Day, was a hero, second only to Shays himself. Perry wondered what was to become of a people who could be so easily deceived. Then he roused himself.

"I 'll go down and have a word with that blacksmith's boy. Perhaps I can learn something from him about the Browns."

With that he put on his hat and strolled leisurely toward the tap-room.

CHAPTER XVI.

JIMMY BROWN and Abe Morse crossed the narrow piazza, and passed through the door into the tap-room, where a few of the spectators of the parade of Captain Day's troops had taken themselves to drink to the success of their brave fellow-townsmen who had gone forth from their homes and friends to do battle for freedom and justice. The two young men were not pleased with their mission, and would have preferred to go on with the others, thus putting a greater distance between themselves and the company of mounted militiamen whom they were momentarily expecting to enter the town. Morse was less timid than Brown, but even he was not of a warlike temperament. He was long, lank, ungainly, and stupid, but withal an honest, hard-working lad who had energy enough upon the farm, but who lacked the spirit necessary for the work which Captain Shays was undertaking. In fact, there were few among the

captain's followers, outside the veterans of the Continental army, who were not better fitted to handle the plough than the musket, so that in this respect Abe Morse was not much below the average in capacity. Young Brown, however, was of a timid, listless disposition, though a well-meaning boy without any other real faults. He never seemed to fit in anywhere, and as he had made a failure at the forge and on the farm, so he seemed destined to make a failure on the field of battle. His first trial had not proved a success; and now he was in a state of absolute terror, and was trying to think out some way of escape from his military service. He was between two fires, and he was not sure that he would not prefer to go on with Captain Shays rather than to return and face his father.

"Abe," said Jimmy, as they sat down in the corner of the tap-room away from the assembled guests, "I tell ye I want to go home. I don't like this here business, and I ain't fitted for it. It makes me narvous."

"And me too," answered Abe; "but I suppose we've got to stand it, and do our best. Careful how you talk. We don't want 'em to hear us and know who we be."

"How're we going to find out what them sol-

diers is going to do when they get here?" asked Jimmy, anxiously.

"They 'll come here, and if they take lodging here, then we 'll know they ain't going on. If they don't, and order their horses, then they 'll be for starting right along. Guess it 'll be easy enough to find out. Mr. Simins here 'll have our horses ready, and when we give him the word he 'll get 'em for us and we 'll start for Pelham."

For a time neither spoke, but both sat watching the people who came and went, and listening to their conversation. Suddenly Jimmy took off his hat and holding it in front of his face leaned over toward Morse and whispered, —

"Oh, gosh, Abe, can't we get out of here? It 's him."

Abe was at a loss to understand who it was who caused his friend so much agitation, and looked about the room inquiringly. When his eyes reached the door leading into the hall, he noticed standing in it a large, broad-shouldered young man, examining the inmates of the room with much curiosity. He caught Morse's eye, and the next moment crossed the room to where he and Jimmy were sitting.

"Where 's your young friend?" asked Perry,

not recognizing Jimmy behind the hat. "Oh, I see. Take down your hat, my boy. I won't hurt you."

Jimmy did as he was bid, and William continued, —

"Why didn't you go on with your friends? You were with them as they marched by the tavern."

"For Heaven's sake, sir," said Jimmy, pleadingly, "don't speak so loud, or we 're both dead men."

"I don't think you 'll get killed as easily as all that," answered Perry, with a smile. "You can run too well. The captain's hand seems to trouble him a little yet. But I came to speak to you about something else. Won't you both come up to my room? Or, better, you come, and let your friend stay here and watch. I don't want to get you into trouble."

Jimmy looked appealingly at Abe, and neither seemed able to answer.

"You seem to hesitate," said Perry, after waiting in vain for him to speak. "Very well, then; I 'll draw a chair up here, and will say what I wish. There 's no danger of our being overheard, so don't look so worried. I 've just come from Petersham; and the old blacksmith you were working

with when I passed through there the other day is in a bad way."

Jimmy looked up anxiously, and asked, —

"Is he sick?"

"Not exactly, but he 's troubled, and I want to find out something about him from you. Have you known him long?"

"He 's my father."

Perry started in his chair, and turned toward the boy.

"He 's your father?" said he, doubtingly. The other nodded. "Then you must know a great deal about his affairs. How did he get into debt? How long has the farm been mortgaged?"

"I don't know," answered Jimmy, surprised at being asked such questions by a stranger. "I guess it 's some time. He 's been fussier than usual for a spell, and I kind of thought he had something a fretting him. But he don't never tell me much. Ruth knows all about it, I guess."

"Why did you leave him and your sister to come off here on this fool's errand?" asked Perry. "Why did n't you stay with them and help them, or at least try to go somewhere where you could gain something?"

"'Cause father sent me. I asked him to let me

stay, but he would n't listen to it. He said it was my duty to follow Cap'n Shays."

"Well, I don't know that he was n't right," said Perry, in disgust. "But I 'll tell you one thing, and then you can do as you like. Your father is breaking down under the strain; and if you had a tenth part of the pluck of your sister, you 'd go back and take hold of things, and try to straighten them out. You 'll never make a soldier, and your father ought to have known it."

"I know it, sir," said Jimmy; "and I told father so, but it was n't no use. I 'm afraid to go back to him, and I 'm scart to go ahead."

"Then you 're a fool," said Perry, rising and going to the door. "The troops will be here before long, and if you don't put on a more unconcerned expression than you have now, they 'll suspect who you are, and you 'll be likely to get into trouble. I 'm going to my room now, and I 'll leave you to think matters over."

"You won't say nothing about who we be, will you, sir?" asked Jimmy, pleadingly.

"I 'm not sure what I 'll do," Perry replied with a smile. "What I ought to do is to hand you over to the authorities when they arrive. But I guess it will be better to let you go on your errand. If you see Captain Shays, tell him that 'Mr. Lawyer'

hopes to meet him in Springfield, if not sooner. Good-night. I advise you to start before it 's much later."

The two youths watched him as he retired, then got up without speaking, and led by the same impulse walked out of the tavern round to the barn, mounted their horses, and started in pursuit of Captain Day and his recruits.

William Perry entered his room and threw his hat violently into a chair. Then he lighted the candle, and seated himself at the table.

"That 's her brother," he thought, his mouth firmly closed. "I don't believe it. I can't believe it. But I suppose he must be if he says so. I 'm feeling tired, so I 'll just throw myself on the bed a minute, and take a nap."

He blew out the candle, and lying down, tried to sleep. His brain was in such a confused whirl that he could not close his eyes. He tossed about for a few moments, then got up, drew back the window-curtains, and sat looking out on the dark road. Presently he heard the tramp of horses, and a little after about fifty horsemen halted before the inn. Perry could not see them very distinctly, but he knew that they were the militiamen or volunteers who were expected by the insurgents. He hastily drew the curtains, and picking up his hat,

rushed out in front of the tavern. As he reached the street the men were dismounting, and he examined them carefully in hopes of recognizing some one. He was not disappointed, for a young man stopped, and putting out his hand said, —

"For Heaven's sake, Perry, how did you turn up in this place?"

"I 'm on my way to the opening of court, Mason, as I suppose you are. Or have you taken up arms?"

"No. I 'm on the same errand as you, and have taken advantage of an escort. Why did n't you wait for us? It 's lucky you 're alive."

Perry laughed.

"I don't believe you 've seen the enemy," he said. "I have, and I 've had a little skirmish all by myself. Two wounded, one escaped," and he laughed again.

"You always were a harebrained chap," answered the other; "but you 've always seemed to get off without a scratch. What do you hear about Shays? They told us in Barre that some of his stragglers were only a few miles ahead of us, and we've been expecting to come across them all day."

"They left here about two hours ago, and have gone through Shutesbury to Pelham. They are a

frightful body of men," said Perry, shaking his head.

"You don't say so? How many were there?"

"I 'm afraid to tell you. They were led by one of the fiercest-looking captains I ever saw. A regular fire-eater."

The other looked at him suspiciously, and, noticing the smile which Perry could not restrain, said good-naturedly, —

"The same old fraud, Perry. Well, tell me really what they were? The captain wants to know."

"There were about twenty of the most forlorn human beings, mounted upon twenty of the clumsiest steeds I ever saw. Their captain was one of the two I wounded in battle, and wore a bandage round his damaged hand. If your captain wishes to catch 'em to-night, I don't think he 'll have much trouble. Shays expects to meet 'em in Pelham, but how many recruits he has I don't know. I should have pushed on to-day, but thought it more prudent to wait for your company."

"I 'm surprised you did n't go on and challenge the whole lot of 'em," said the other, with a laugh.

"I thought of doing it," answered Perry, with a mock seriousness; "but I 've got business before the court, and could n't afford even to take so

little risk as that. Do you expect to be off to-night?"

"The captain told me only a short time ago that he should rest here under any circumstances, and start at sunrise to-morrow. We ought to catch up with 'em in the afternoon, and we may have some fun. I 've got to go along now and find the captain and tell him what you say. Good-night."

Perry really felt a sense of relief at the prospect of having congenial company through the rest of his trip, and after giving orders to the keeper to call him half an hour before sunrise, he went to bed and was soon sleeping soundly.

CHAPTER XVII.

JIMMY and Abe rode away through the night as fast as their horses could take them, which was, in truth, not very fast. Yet they did very well, and eventually brought their riders safely to the little hamlet of Shutesbury, an outlying village next the township of Pelham.

"They met one of Cap'n Shays' men here," said a man of whom they inquired for Day and his company. "He came with orders to move right on to Pelham."

The two men asked no further questions, but whipping up their tired horses, started forward again.

In the mean while, Perry and the militia were resting quietly in Millington village. About an hour before sunrise there was a stir in the little hamlet, and as the first light of dawn was creeping up over the Petersham hills, the company of volunteers, who had answered to the call of Governor

Bowdoin to go to Springfield and join General Shepard, rode out over the road which Captain Day had taken but a few hours before. Perry and Mason were side by side in the rear of the others, and for some time after their first exchange of morning greetings neither spoke. Perry seemed preoccupied, and his friend noticed it.

"Thinking up your cases?" said Mason, as they were climbing a steep bit of road a few miles to the west of New Salem.

"No," answered Perry, as one suddenly awakened. "No; I was wondering what all this row was about, anyway. It seems to me that it could have been prevented by a few concessions on the part of government. Not that I approve of these rascals who are stirring up the people to rebellion. Not at all. But I 've seen some pretty strong examples of the sufferings of the country folk, and there is no doubt that they 're more to be pitied than blamed. They were in earnest, too, and perfectly sincere; as much so as were our patriots of ten years ago, and to them the burdens of taxation by our present government, seems as unjust as those imposed by the British Parliament before '76. I 'm a moderate, you see, and perhaps you 'll think me disloyal, but I cannot believe that all the fault is on one side."

"I don't know about that, Perry," answered the other, shaking his head. "The farmers must expect to contribute their share to the general fund, and should do so without grumbling."

"Would you, or I, or any of us, be willing to be stripped of everything, — be forced to go into debt for the ordinary necessities of life, and sit and smile and be patient? No, Mason. I 'm a poor man, and so are you. There are few of us who are not; but we can manage to pull through somehow, and to clothe and feed ourselves. These poor people can do neither. The treatment is too heroic, and the patient is rebelling. That's all there is to it. Don't misunderstand me, however. It has gone so far now that I am convinced that it must be stopped with a firm hand. Yet I see another side to it, and I feel the end is not in sight yet."

They were now passing through a level stretch of country whence to the west could be seen the line of the Berkshire Hills. The road was rough, but the captain was in a hurry, so upon his order the little company started off at a canter. They had not gone far when there was an abrupt order to halt, and looking between those in front of him, Perry saw, not more than a hundred rods away, a horseman, seated quietly watching them as they

approached. He was on the brow of the hill with the sky behind him, and Perry recognized him. It was Captain Day. In another moment he disappeared, and the little band of volunteers galloped up in pursuit of him. On reaching the summit they found that there was a steep pitch leading to the valley below, and that Captain Day had succeeded in eluding them.

"Never mind," said the captain. "Walk your horses down, and we'll catch 'em before the day 's out. They can't be far off now."

They advanced with great caution, for the road was lined with thick woods, and in places high banks rose beside them from which it would not have been difficult for the rebels to attack them. It seemed most probable, however, that they would try to escape, for they wished to reach Springfield rather than waste their energies on the way. This is what Perry told his companions; but he was mistaken, for on turning the next bend in the road they saw stretched across it a body of horsemen. They were the men whom Perry had seen the day before, but they were not alone. Behind and beside them were gathered more than a hundred others, on foot, all apparently farmers, armed with the first weapons they had been able to lay their hands on, when Captain Shays had called

on them to do their duty and follow him. It must be said that they were a determined-looking set of men. As Perry had told his friend a short time before, they were conscientious and thought their freedom was at stake. They considered the government and the military as their enemies, and they had sworn to stand for their rights.

The first impulse of the militia captain was to make a dash and break through them, but a moment's hesitation made him change his mind. He saw clearly that the men intended to stand their ground, and that the only way to avoid unnecessary bloodshed was to wait for them to make the first move, and failing this, to use his authority with a bit of persuasion.

"Clear the way there," he shouted, "in the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts!" There was a slight movement in the opposing ranks, but no sign of yielding.

"Once more," called out the captain again. "Clear the way, and lay down your arms. If you do this, you may return quietly to your homes. If not, I shall be obliged to force a passage."

Again there was no answer, and the captain began to lose patience.

"Where 's your leader?" he said, riding forward.

"Here I am," answered Day, coming out of the

rank to meet him. "You can't go by here, my friend, and I advise ye not to try it. Captain Shays is only a few miles behind us with two hundred men, and I guess you might 's well give it up and go back to Boston."

"Surrender, you rascal," roared the captain, giving Day's word no heed. "This is your last chance."

Day smiled.

"I guess not, mister," he said. "Jest suppose you do the surrendering. You 've about fifty, and I 've got about three times as many."

"So you had the other day," called out Perry from behind the ranks, "but you were n't very successful."

Day scowled, and his bandaged hand slipped down beside his horse.

"Aim high," whispered the militia captain to the man behind him. "Give the word through the ranks." Then he went on aloud, addressing Day, "I 've given you your last chance, so — Ready! fire!"

There was a loud report and a few screams, then a scattering of the enemy in all directions. Captain Day tried to check them, but it was useless, for the moment the rattle of the muskets reached the ears of those in front, they wheeled about,

thus coming into collision with those behind them. All was confusion; and the farmers, seeing themselves abandoned by their mounted escort, took to the woods and fields, and were soon out of danger. Captain Day held his ground firmly until he saw the enemy charging upon him. Then he turned, and shouting, "Stop, you damned cowards!" made after his scattered army at full speed.

Perry had watched the proceedings with much interest, for besides his old friend the captain, he had noticed in the ranks Jimmy Brown and Abe Morse. The former, being in the rear and having a clear road, had been the first to decamp, but unfortunately for him he was even a poorer rider than his companion in arms, and as he turned a sharp corner he lost his stirrup, and was thrown headlong into the bushes beside the road. The fall was a heavy one, and the poor boy was groaning when Perry rode up to him and dismounted.

"I don't want to detain you, captain," he said, as the others came up, "but I know this boy, and would like to have him carried to the next house. He seems to be suffering."

"I 'm in no hurry, sir," answered the captain, pleasantly. "Shays will get word of our coming soon enough, and I don't think he 'll wait for us. He 'll take some other way of going to Springfield,

and we 'll have no further trouble. Two of my men will carry the boy along."

In the mean while Jimmy was groaning, with his head on Perry's knee. His face was deathly pale, and his eyes closed. Presently he opened them, and seeing Perry uttered a terrified cry.

"It 's all right, my boy," said William, kindly, "You 've had a bad fall. Where does it hurt you?"

Jimmy raised his hand slowly to his head, and tried to speak, but was too weak.

"I 'm afraid the poor boy 's done for," he said to the two men who had dismounted to help carry Jimmy. "Take him easily, please."

"There 's a house just beyond here," said one of the men. "I saw it from the top of the hill."

"Then if you 'll kindly carry him there, I 'll lead your horses."

As they moved forward again, Mason rode up to William and asked with curiosity, —

"Where did you ever see that young fellow before, Perry? You seem to take quite an interest in him."

"I first saw him about ten days ago in a blacksmith's shop in Petersham. Since then I 've come across him twice, and I have had occasion to visit his father on a matter of business. This poor boy

is of very little account to the world at large, but if he should die I'm afraid that it would be the last straw for the old man, who is one of those unfortunate debtors of whom I spoke to you a little while ago. He is alone with his daughter in Petersham, and on their account I feel an interest in this boy."

"You are certainly a kind-hearted fellow," said the other, with a smile.

"I don't know about that," answered Perry, abstractedly. "I am only human, and I can't see suffering of any kind without feeling it myself."

"What are you going to do with him when we reach the house?"

"If he seems all right, I 'll leave him with the people there. If not, I shall stay with him and send word to his sister. In the latter event I shall ask you to continue my cases. Will you do so for me?"

"With pleasure. I 'll look 'em up as soon as I arrive, and I 've no doubt that they will do anything to accommodate you. Here we are at the house, and they're taking him in."

"Don't wait for me, captain," said Perry, as he dismounted. "If I decide to go on to-day, I can overtake you; but I doubt if I do so."

The farmer's wife led the men to a little room

off the kitchen, where they laid the boy upon a bed. After Perry had thanked them they mounted their horses and galloped after the others.

"Is there a doctor near here?" asked Perry, as he sat by Jimmy's bedside.

"Yes, sir, about three mile away. Joe 'll ride right up and get him."

"Thank you," answered Perry; "I 'm afraid he 'll have to hurry."

An hour later the doctor arrived, and when he saw the youth, he shook his head.

"Concussion of the brain, sir. He won't live till morning. I 'll bleed him. That 's the only thing to do."

CHAPTER XVIII.

WILLIAM PERRY watched for two days and nights by Jimmy Brown's bedside. When the doctor came, in the afternoon of the third day, he found his patient better, and gave hopes of his recovery; so Perry decided to push on toward Springfield. The people in the farm-house promised to send to Ruth should her brother need her, so bidding the boy farewell, William mounted Molly and rode toward the southwest, intending to avoid the main highway, through Hadley and Northampton, and to strike that farther south. He thought he might by so doing gain time, and also prevent further interception by the insurgents. He knew that it would be useless to attempt to catch up with the militia company.

As he passed up hill and down over the narrow winding grass-grown roads, scarcely more than cow-paths, now closely hemmed in by thick forests

of pine and hemlock, now opening out into some valley from which could be seen the waving line of the Berkshire Hills, with Mount Tom standing out toward the southwest like a great boulder, he thought over his adventures of the past two weeks, the most eventful of his life. He had learned much in that short time ; and he wondered if it was all only chance, or whether he was destined to play an important part in the lives of the people he had been brought in contact with on so many occasions and under so many different conditions. It was now less than two weeks since he had dropped unexpectedly and by accident upon Deacon Brown and his son in the smithy in Petersham, and now he began to feel a certain responsibility for them, and that their welfare and happiness depended upon him. He had fully made up his mind that he would do all in his power to prevent the blacksmith's fast-approaching ruin; but as he had told his friend the day before, he was a poor man and had to earn his living by hard work. Yet he had one advantage over many others. He was alone, and had no one dependent upon him, and his needs were small. Suddenly he smiled and asked himself why he should take so much interest in these utter strangers, — why he should stop to consider their sufferings more than those

of hundreds of others whom he had seen in the course of his journey. To be sure, he had been thrown with them more closely than with the others, and knew more of their affairs; but even so it was all largely a matter of business, and he had had many distressing cases in his professional career. But none of them had affected him in the same degree as did this one. He thought of old Brown, and though he pitied him, he could see no reason for being especially attracted to him. As to Jimmy, he was a poor little wretch who meant no harm, but was capable of no good. Then there was Ruth. As he thought of her, the explanation of his feelings seemed to come to him. Yes; it was the girl's sad, pleading eyes, her devotion to her father, and her courage and desire to help him, that had made the difference in their case.

"It 's so different with a young girl alone," he thought. "The men can get out of their troubles sooner or later in some way; but the women, especially on a far-off farm, can do nothing."

Thus he rode along for hours, meditating on the past and speculating on the future. The mare had had an easy time during the last few days, and was fresh and full of spirit; and this, added to the bracing air of the September afternoon, gradually

smoothed the wrinkles from Perry's brow and brought back the old smile which had been absent for so long. Finally he found himself humming as he had done on his first day out from Boston.

"I feel better now that I 've thought these things over and straightened 'em out a bit in my mind," he concluded. "Strange I have n't met any one yet. I might as well be in the wilds of Norway. But I like it. I 've had enough company lately, and I 'll have plenty more in a day or two. If Molly keeps as fresh as this, I shall be in time for the opening of the session — if they have any!" and he laughed aloud.

As he did so, he thought he heard something in front of him. The road was now through a densely shaded stretch, and as the sun was well below the tree-tops it was at times difficult to distinguish objects clearly. He therefore touched the mare, and started off at a brisk canter. On turning a bend he saw not many yards in advance of him a horseman beating his steed vehemently, evidently trying to escape his pursuer. Perry touched up Molly again, and was soon gaining on the fugitive.

"Hey! Stop! Why are you running away?" shouted William. The other did not answer, but looking over his shoulder, gave his horse a more vigorous tap than before and tried to urge him

forward. Perry had now recognized the young man who had been with Jimmy Brown in Millington village, so called out again, —

"Wait; I want to speak to you. I shall catch you anyway in less than five minutes, so you 're spoiling horse-flesh uselessly."

Abe Morse was not yet convinced and still urged his weary beast.

"Now I 've got you," said Perry, a few moments later, as he overtook him. "But I don't wish you any harm, so just pull up. That 's right."

"I thought you were the troops," said Abe, out of breath.

"Well, I 'm not, and they 're out of the way. Now I want to speak seriously to you. Your friend came near getting killed the other day, and I 've lost a good deal of valuable time in looking after him. He 's better now. Turn about and go back to him. He 's in the first house this side of the hill where we had the battle."

"Are the militia gone?" asked Abe, a little timidly.

"Yes, you fool," answered Perry, with a motion of contempt; "and if they were n't, it would be your duty to go and look after your friend. He may need some one to get word to his father and sister."

"I 'll go right along, then," said Morse, with a little show of spirit. "I vow I was frightened, though, and I don't deny it. I suppose it 's natural with some folks."

"I should say it was from what I saw the other day," answered Perry, with a laugh. "But I don't know that I can blame you. One has to get used to such things, and some of our bravest soldiers have been cowards in their first battles. So go ahead, and perhaps you 'll be on Captain Shays' staff before the war is over."

"Where did you say Jimmy was?" asked Abe, not noticing Perry's last remark.

"In the house nearest the hill where you left him. The man's name is White. Good-bye. I shall be back through Petersham in about ten days, and I expect to find the boy all right then. Remember me to him."

Abe was about to start when Perry called him.

"Wait a moment. Do you know the Browns well?"

"Yes, sir; known 'em all my life. The deacon and father went to the war together, and our farm is next to theirs."

"Are they any worse off than the other families about them?" asked Perry, thoughtfully.

"I guess not, sir, so fur 's I know. We ain't

none of us got any money these days. But they do say that the old man is acting kind of queer lately. Jimmy says he 's harder on him than ever. But Jimmy 's kind of aggravating, he 's so slow."

"And the daughter?" Perry asked with interest. "Is her father ever unkind to her?"

"No, sir. Never. Ruth can make him do pretty much as she likes; but then she 's different from Jimmy. She 's strong and hearty and lively, and does a lot of work."

"Thank you. That 's all I want to know," said Perry, nodding. "Good-bye."

He rode away rapidly down the road, leaving Abe looking after him.

"What 's he want to know so much about 'em for?" thought young Morse, as he started back toward Shutesbury. "Seems to me he 's mighty particular about Ruth, too. I guess she can get along without his advice," and he whipped up his horse and galloped along. Perry continued on his journey with a feeling of relief, and it was late into the evening before he reached the little town of Granby, twelve miles northwest of Springfield. His first impulse was to wait until morning, and then ride on early so that he would be in time for the opening of court. But upon reflection he was not sure that it would not be wise to push ahead

under cover of the night, for he would be less likely to be recognized, and perhaps able to enter the town unobserved. Therefore after supper, and a sufficient time for himself and Molly to become fit for further travel, he set out through the village. The night was dark and the roads rough, so he durst not go out of a walk. Thus it was after midnight when he entered Ludlow and turned west toward Springfield. Up to this time he had seen very few people since he left Abe Morse. Now the scene changed as if by magic, and dark figures passed him at every moment headed in the direction of Springfield. He met many also, and groups were gathered by the roadside. It was apparent to him that some important preparations were being made, and he had no difficulty in guessing what they were. The insurgents were marshalling their forces for an early attack upon the town, and he had done well to come on by night; for no one knew him, and in the darkness they thought him one of their number. Once some one stopped and spoke, saying, "All by the big oak at sunrise;" and as Perry nodded assent, the man rode away satisfied. When he got within a few miles of the town, everything seemed quieter, and he met only a few stragglers, evidently on their way to the appointed meeting. Thus he

rode into the town without further interruption, and going to the square by the main street, secured lodgings at the Coffee House.

It was nearly two o'clock in the morning when Perry at last fell asleep. He was awakened soon after sunrise by the sound of a fife and drum, and jumping from his bed hastily, he ran to the window overlooking the square. A company of militia was marching toward the Court House, where a large crowd of people was already assembled. Perry dressed hurriedly and ordered breakfast at once, after which he walked across the square.

"Halloa, Perry," said a voice, as he was about to force his way through the throng, "so you 've got here safely?"

Perry turned and saw Mason.

"Yes; I turned up at the Coffee House a few hours ago. Is there going to be any court to-day?"

"Of course there is. There 'll be about six hundred troops in town before the opening, and Shays has only a few followers scattered outside. He can't hold 'em together, and they 'll never dare to attack Shepard. I was just thinking about you, and was going to look up the standing of your matters, but you 've saved me the trouble."

"Thank you. That boy seemed to be out of

danger, so I left him. I came on by night, so escaped observation."

"Did you meet your friend Luke Day on the way?" asked Mason, with a laugh.

"No. I 'm afraid his forces are hopelessly dispersed. I saw one of 'em, and sent him back to look after young Brown. With this exception I have not set eyes on any of them since that memorable attack in Shutesbury."

"Shays will be disappointed, for he 's expecting reinforcements. Come into the hall; I want to look up something before the crowd begins to move. Every one 's on hand early this morning, and I guess we can get to work before long."

With some shoving and pushing the two young men finally succeeded in gaining an entrance.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON the third day after his arrival in Springfield, William Perry left it again, and started back toward Petersham in company with a squad of militia which had orders to pass northward through Pelham and Barre to disperse such of the insurgents as they might find collected along their route. Perry had not been able to accomplish much before the court, owing to the constant disturbances about the Court House and outside the town; and he was much relieved when the justices adjourned, and Shays and Day, satisfied for the time being with their achievements, decided to retire from the scene of action. At Pelham he bade farewell to his escort, and on the afternoon of the second day after leaving Springfield he rode into Petersham village and on toward Deacon Brown's forge.

It was now the middle of September, and the country about him had begun to put on its coat of many colors. The air was crisp, even cool, and he

had enjoyed his ride, and his spirits had been good most of the way. But when from the hillside he saw the house and barn of the Brown farm, his mood suddenly changed, and his thoughts returned to Ruth and her father.

"I wonder if the old man will listen to me," he mused, with his eyes strained toward the hill across the valley. "They told me that the boy had been taken home by his friend. I don't know whether his father will be toned down or stirred up by the sight of his battle-scarred son."

About midway between Petersham village and the farm, where the road wound down between the thick pine woods, was a tiny brook where Perry had stopped to water the mare on his journey west. This brook flowed south, then west, finally joining the larger stream in the valley below, which ran on through meadow and forest, into Swift River.

Still absorbed in thought, Perry was descending the uneven pitch with care, when he was roused by a sound among the trees next him. He turned his head, but seeing nothing, proceeded quietly until he reached the ford, where he guided Molly a little to the left, and let her drink in the pool under the boulders. He resumed his journey down round the curve over the dam, and on up toward the brow of the hill looking down on the smithy.

From the smoke issuing from the blacksmith's shop, he knew that Deacon Brown must be there, and he hesitated a moment before going down toward it. At last he started on again and pulled up before the open door.

The blacksmith was standing at the bench with his back toward the road, and did not notice Perry as he approached. For a few moments the young man sat in the saddle and watched him. It seemed to Perry that the deacon had changed much since he first saw him; that his back was not as straight as it had been; and that his hand moved less firmly and with less steadiness. There was an uncertain, hesitating manner as he picked up the tools and examined his work, and Perry's heart softened as he watched him.

"The poor old chap," he thought, still looking at him, "trying to work and earn enough to keep body and soul together, and with this debt hanging over him. I 'll try to be patient with him. Here goes for a brave dash." He dropped from the saddle, and passing his arm through the bridle, walked up to the open door and called out pleasantly, —

"Good-day, Mr. Brown. Busy, I see, as usual. I promised to call on you on my return, and here I am."

Deacon Brown dropped his tools upon the bench. He turned suddenly round and stared at the young man with bloodshot eyes, and for a moment did not speak, but stood motionless, examining Perry carefully. Then the frown disappeared, and he seemed to recognize him, and said slowly, —

"Oh! so you 're back, are ye? I 'm busy and can't speak with ye to-day. I 've been to Boston and fixed everything up with Piper, and we don't neither of us want any help from ye."

Perry looked at him in amazement.

"You 've been to Boston, Mr. Brown?" he said doubtingly.

"Yes, sir, and I made that 'ere little thief do as I told him to. It 's all fixed."

Perry still examined him carefully, wondering whether he was trying to put him off. Then he said with a smile, —

"I 'm very glad, Mr. Brown, if you 've been able to arrange matters satisfactorily. Do you mind telling me what you did?"

"I treated ye kind of rough the last time you was here, and I ain't changed my mind about ye and your sneaking business. But Abe here," pointing at the young man standing by the bellows, whom Perry had not noticed on entering the shop, "says ye was good to Jimmy, and did what ye

could for him after he was hurt. I thank ye, sir, for that, and perhaps it 'll make up for some of your sins."

Perry smiled and answered, —

"That was nothing, Mr. Brown. I had plenty of time, and the poor boy was in a bad way. How is he now?"

"Getting along all right, only it 's knocked out the little sense he had. But I was a going to say, Ruth tried to make me promise to speak to ye when I come home, and when Abe told me about Jimmy I said I would. But I don't trust ye, and I 'm only doing it 'cause I said I would."

"I 'm glad you 've decided to do so. Now tell me what you did in Boston. It may make a difference in what I shall do when I return there."

"Well, I 'll tell ye, and then ye can be going. I give Piper a new note, and he give me a receipt for them others."

Perry gave a sudden start, and looked at the blacksmith closely.

"You gave him a new note? For how much?"

"Three hundred dollars, to be sure."

"And what kind of a receipt did he give you?"

"Here it is," said Brown, drawing it forth from his pocket. Perry took it and read it, then uttered an exclamation.

"Why, Mr. Brown, this is no good. It was n't even signed, and it 's bad in form. That little rascal has cheated you, and he has now your notes for six hundred dollars. I wrote him a week ago that the notes I have would be paid, and now you have spoiled everything."

The blacksmith stared at him a moment, and then a look of suspicion came into his eyes.

"I guess, sir, it 's all right," he said. "Jest give me back that paper, and how about them notes you have? Seems to me that they 're mine. Will you kindly give 'em to me?"

"I can't do that now, for I have no authority to part with them until they are paid, and I have no proof that they have been paid as yet. But I 'll look out for them for you, and try to straighten this thing out. You 've made a bad mess of it, sir, and it 's lucky I have the notes."

"Lucky for who?" said Brown, his brows contracting. "Lucky for you, I guess, and you meant to keep 'em all the time. You 're jest what I said you was, and I 'm a damned fool to have anything to do with ye. You 've got them notes, have ye? Well, they won't do ye no good, and you 'll have to try to cheat some one else."

Perry had made up his mind not to get angry

with the man, for it had become very evident that he was not wholly responsible for what he did and said. He decided, therefore, to say nothing further about the matter, and to act according to his own judgment.

"Very well, then," he said cheerfully, "as you have everything settled I can be of no further service to you, and will be moving along."

He mounted the mare, and rode away, leaving the blacksmith and Abe Morse staring after him. When he reached the turn in the road leading toward Barre, he hesitated a moment, then guided Molly round to the left, and a little later rapped on the shed door, which was opened by Jimmy himself, his head bandaged and his face very pale.

"Well, my boy, I 'm glad to see you about again," said Perry, taking the youth's hand. "You look rather poorly, though. Is your sister in? Yes? Can I speak to her a moment?"

"She 's in the kitchen, sir. Won't you come in?"

"I think not. I 've just seen your father, and I 'm afraid he 'll not approve of my coming up here at all."

Jimmy went into the house, and in a few moments Ruth appeared. Perry was really startled

when he saw her. Her face was worn and thin, and she took his proffered hand with a sad smile, as she said, —

"You 've been very kind to Jimmy, sir."

"Don't speak of it, Miss Brown," answered Perry, with an attempt at gayety. "I 've just seen your father, and he has told me of what he 's done with Piper. I wish to ask you not to worry about these things. Your father does not trust me, but I feel that you do, and that you will believe what I tell you. He has made a great blunder, but I think I can make it all right if you will help me. Your father's mind is overwrought by all these worries, and you must try to deceive him a little. If he says that I am cheating him, agree with him, and in the mean while I will see Piper."

"You are very, very kind," said Ruth, looking up into his eyes, gratefully. "I do trust you, and I 'll follow your advice. Father 's breaking down, and I 'm beginning to lose control of him. There was a time when he would do anything for me, but he 's changed so much lately."

"Keep a brave heart, Miss Brown," answered Perry. "I 'll send you word of what I do. Keep your eyes open for the post. Now I must go, or your father will see me and suspect something.

I feel sure that Jimmy will keep our secret. Good-bye."

Ruth stood and watched him until he disappeared over the ledge on the road to Barre. Then with a sigh she turned and went into the house.

Three days later William Perry crossed Charlestown bridge into Boston, and rode directly to Jerry Piper's shop.

CHAPTER XX.

IT was now the end of November. The legislature in extra session had received the petitions from the malcontents all over the State; heard the address of the governor; and passed measures of relief which, it was thought, would satisfy the people and cause them to lay down their arms and return to their homes. But the leaders — Shays, Day, Shattuck, Parsons, and Wheeler — were not sincere, and were looking further than to the welfare of the farmers. They wished control of government, and the power and benefit it would bring them individually. So it was that, notwithstanding the good intentions and generous actions of government, the insurgents still kept on in their mad career, regardless of everything.

William Perry was sitting in his office on King Street, absorbed in the study of some legal documents, when the door opened and Jeremiah Piper crept into the room, hat in hand. He looked about him to make sure that no stranger was present, then went forward and spoke, —

"Good-day, sir. I've come to see you about the mortgage. You remember that when you paid the notes and the hundred dollars, I agreed to let it run for six weeks beyond its date. The time will be up in three days, sir, and I shall be obliged to foreclose unless something is done in the meanwhile. I'm sorry, sir, very sorry, but I've lost a great deal of money lately, and the new laws make it very hard for me."

Perry looked at him a moment with a contemptuous smile. Then he said,—

"I understand you perfectly, Mr. Piper, and I think you know it. When I paid you the four hundred dollars you agreed not to foreclose without giving me ample notice. Do you consider three days sufficient time in which to make such arrangements, in excited times like these? No court will sustain you, sir, and I have your written agreement, and it provides also that you shall forfeit your claim if you divulge the name of the person who took up the notes."

"I know it, sir, I know it," answered Piper, persuasively, "and that is why I've come to see you. I said the mortgage was due in three days, but not that I intended foreclosing in that time. I want to learn what you consider a reasonable time."

"Mr. Piper," said Perry, coolly, "you are a

miserable little villain, and if I did as I 'm inclined to do I 'd take you by the nape of your neck and throw you out of that window. But you 'd land on your feet like a cat, and come back to trouble us all again, so my efforts would avail little. You 've had two good lawyers, Mr. Ames and myself, and had you been honest we would have continued to serve you. But you took advantage of a poor broken-down man who at best knew nothing of business, and whose mind had been weakened so that he was easily deceived. You hoped to get double the amount he owed you, but fortunately I was in a position to prevent this. I shall give you no time in this matter. You may follow your own inclinations, but I warn you that I am watching you, and I advise you to move carefully."

The money-lender looked up at him from under his eyebrows and smiled.

"I 'm sorry, sir, that you won't look at things more fairly. I 've been very easy on this gentleman, and I do not wish to press him; but I shall be obliged to foreclose."

"How do you propose to go about it?" asked Perry, with a confident smile. "It seems to me that you 'll have a good deal of trouble under the circumstances. It 's difficult to get judgment at present."

"I 'm advised to enter the premises, sir, and that is the mode I shall take."

"Under the statute of '85? Very well, Mr. Piper. This is the nineteenth day of November, and you are probably aware that the General Court has risen, having endeavored to pacify the malcontents, but without apparent success. In order to make an entry it will be necessary for you to take a perilous journey, and as I have had some experience in such matters, I advise you to postpone your trip until the farmers are in a pleasanter mood. You have had occasion to see Mr. Brown when under the influence of passion, and he has told me that he intends to strangle you if you appear in Petersham. Were I sure that this would be the outcome of your visit, I would not ask you to delay it, and not on that account do I suggest your postponing action."

"I 've taken precautions, sir," said the little man, with a wicked look in his eyes, "and threats will do no good. The court meets in Worcester day after to-morrow, and my attorney has already begun proceeding of foreclosure. The case will be heard in Worcester on the twenty-first, and if anything should prevent this I shall proceed to Petersham and enter the premises in company with an officer of the law and proper witnesses. I won't

trouble you any more, sir. I am advised that our agreement is not binding, and that I can now enter for non-performance of the conditions of the mortgage. Good-day, sir."

"You damned little scamp," said Perry, rising in a passion, "leave my office, and do what you please. I know what your rights are, and propose to see that you don't exceed them. Get out of here, I say," he went on, advancing toward the cringing figure.

"I 'll leave immediately," said Piper, raising his hand deprecatingly. "Personal abuse sometimes costs money, Mr. Perry. Good-morning."

He backed out of the door, and Perry returned to his desk and sat down.

"What 's to be done now?" he thought, pulling over his papers, and taking one of them up. "Here 's the agreement. I 've paid four hundred dollars out of my own pocket, and I have nothing to show for it but this note, which is not very valuable. Why have I done this?"

He read the paper through carefully, and then began musing again.

"Well, there 's just one thing about it. I 'm going to jump on to Molly this afternoon, and ride to Petersham and give them warning. If this old rascal gets heard in Worcester, then I 'll try to

make some settlement with him. If not, and he attempts to enter the premises, I 'm inclined to think that he 'll meet with opposition."

He rose, and after arranging his papers, went out and down King Street. When he reached the building where Fisher Ames had his office, an idea came to him suddenly.

"I 'll run in and consult Ames," he thought, stopping and turning into the doorway. "He 'll willingly give me his advice."

During the past few weeks Fisher Ames had been very busy assisting in the framing of the new laws which were intended to satisfy the discontented people. The legislature had just risen, and he had returned to his office to gather up the ragged ends of his business, which had sorely suffered from recent neglect. When Perry entered, he found Ames buried in a mass of papers, and evidently very much occupied, for he did not at first notice the young man.

"Good-morning, Ames," said Perry, in his accustomed cheerful manner. "Our old friend has been in to see me again. What an infernal little rascal he is!"

"Good-morning, Perry. Do you mean Jeremiah?" said Ames, with a smile.

"I do, Ames. I don't know how I kept my

hands off him. He 's going to foreclose that Brown mortgage if he can, and I want to prevent him."

"My dear Perry," said Ames, frankly, "has he not a right to foreclose? I believe the mortgage is over-due, and that the mortgageor has paid no interest of late. Such is my impression, although I have given the matter no attention since Piper discharged us, and employed Mason."

"Of course it 's over-due," answered Perry, a little confusedly, "but Brown and his daughter are suffering, and it 's a shame to allow them to be put out of house and home."

"It 's certainly very hard, and I admire your kindness of heart; but there are hundreds, nay, thousands of others who are in the same position, and they have brought it about by their own folly. I advise you not to trouble yourself further about it. You cannot afford, as much as you would wish to do it, to carry all the burdens."

"I know it, I know it, Ames, but this is a peculiar case: a poor, broken-down, honest, hard-working man, with a useless son, and a daughter who is worth saving. I 've seen them, and I have n't seen all the others. I can't bear to think of them as bankrupt and homeless."

"There is a daughter?" said Ames, looking

up at Perry inquisitively. "The dairy-maid? Did n't I tell you beware the dairy-maid? You 've not heeded my warning, Perry."

The young man looked a little annoyed for a moment; then he said with a smile, —

"In a way you are right, Ames. It is the daughter for whom I have the most pity. She 's a fine girl, and if you could see her devotion you would feel as I do."

"Not exactly," said Ames, with an unaccountable expression in his intelligent eyes.

"What do you mean?" asked Perry, quickly, flushing as he caught the other's look.

"I mean," said Ames, rising, and putting his hand on Perry's shoulder, "that there is something inside you which has not yet come to the surface; that is, you have not yet perceived it. I, however, have suspected it for some time; in fact, ever since you last returned from Petersham before the meeting of the General Court. What it is I shall not tell you, but you will discover it before long. No, Perry, I do not blame you for taking this interest in these people; but you cannot expect me to see much difference in their case from that of many others. Piper is a rascal, a cheating little knave; but he holds the mortgage, and the consideration was paid. The courts will sustain

him in any event, unless fraud can be shown, and I 'm inclined to think that he is too sharp to allow any to be detected. Unless you can make some settlement with him, I see no way out of it."

Perry looked at his friend in a bewildered way, and did not speak for some moments. Then he said slowly, fingering the papers upon the desk:

"I — I understand what you mean, Ames, and I take no offence, but you are entirely mistaken. I 've only a natural interest in these poor people, and want to help them. But I see clearly that you are right. Piper has the winning hand, and unless something can be done at once, they are doomed."

"Don't misunderstand me, Perry," said Ames, kindly. "I 'd do a great deal for you, and if there was any encouragement I could give you, I would do so willingly. But there is none, and the only thing to be done is to persuade Piper to make a settlement. You know better than I whether or not this is possible."

"I thank you, Ames, and I know that you are speaking wisely. Yet I cannot see this thing go on. I shall try in some way to prevent it."

"And I sincerely hope that you may succeed. If you need advice or assistance call on me at any time. I shall always be at your service."

"I thank you again. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, Perry, and do not be offended at what I have said. We are old friends, and for that reason I have taken liberties with you. You will soon see that I am not mistaken."

William Perry walked through to Clark Square in a distracted mood. Something was on his mind which he had not noticed before his interview with Ames. He knew very well what it was, but he laughed and denied it to himself.

"It's too absurd," he tried to persuade himself, as he entered his lodgings. "It's perfectly natural that I should be interested in these people."

Two hours later he was riding over Charlestown bridge, but he was neither singing nor whistling; he was thinking of what Ames had said to him, and trying to explain it to himself.

CHAPTER XXI.

PERRY rode on through Concord, Groton, and Gerry, and, as it happened, escaped serious interruption, although at this time Middlesex was in a state of ferment, and Job Shattuck and his men were playing the part of highwaymen with some success, and travelling alone was dangerous. But General Brooks was on his way to disperse them, and this so much occupied their attention, that the insurgent leaders let the quiet-appearing young man pass without molesting him.

The country had become familiar to him of late. Molly took the roads without guiding, and on the afternoon of the second day he passed over the turnpike toward Petersham. It seemed to him that the houses he passed were nearly all deserted, and he soon made up his mind that the men had gone to join the insurgents, and that the women had gathered in some place to await their return.

How different was the scene from that upon which he had looked two months before! The

trees were bare of leaves; the ferns and golden-rod were dying by the roadside, and in the fields; and Mount Monadnock was capped with white, glistening in the sunlight like a great diamond. It was not only his surroundings that had changed in these few weeks. Perry himself had been touched as well as the trees and flowers, and he began to realize it. When the snow-topped mountain came in sight from the brow of the hill, he pulled in the mare and looked at the view before him. Toward the left, over woods and rolling hills, rose the spire of Petersham church; in front, beyond the valley, the summit of the hill where stood the farm, backed by Monadnock; to his right Wachusett. What a beautiful panorama it was in the clear autumn air. What a pity it was that its lords and masters could not enjoy it in peace!

"Well," he thought, with a look of determination on his handsome face, as he touched Molly and began to descend the steep sandy road, "they sha'n't be driven from it if I can help it. I 've decided what I 'll do."

He smiled with satisfaction, as he continued on down the hill. He had nearly reached the bottom, where the brook flowed across the road under the hemlocks, when he was roused from his reveries

by a crackling sound near him, and on turning quickly, noticed the figure of a man emerging from the brush by the side of the stream. The next moment Perry's hand went to his holster, for he had recognized his old acquaintance, Captain Luke Day. He was about to draw forth the pistol, when his hand was tightly grasped, and turning again, he saw that he was held by two men who had stolen up behind him while his attention was on Day. He made an effort to free himself, but could not, and before he was able to drop the reins and reach his other pistol, he was surrounded by a dozen or more men, who dragged him to the ground. It had all been done so quickly that not a word had been spoken.

Perry strained every nerve, and at one time shook the men from him; but they were soon back again, and at last he relaxed and looked from one to the other until his eyes met those of Day. Then suddenly an idea came to him, and he gave a peculiar whistle. With a bound and a kick, Molly dashed down the hill and out of sight round the curve.

"They 'll know whom she belongs to," he thought rapidly. Then speaking aloud, he said, addressing Day: —

"Oh, you rascally blackguard, I suppose you 're

satisfied now that you 've overpowered me by brute force. Do you want to let me loose for just five minutes? No? I did n't imagine that you did, you coward. I advise you not to, for I 'd skin you and crack every bone in your body. I 'm not sure that I sha'n't be able to do it anyway;" and he glared at the captain.

"You see, Mr. Lawyer," answered Day, smiling contemptuously, "that we have to be careful in these anxious times, and so we 've made sure of ye this time. We ain't going to hurt ye, but Captain Shays thinks ye 've travelled the roads too much lately, and so he 's given orders that we shall look after ye for a time, and we 've fixed up some comfortable quarters for ye just down beyond those woods to the left. Sorry you 've got to walk, but you seemed to want to get rid of your horse, so it 's your own fault."

"Yes," answered Perry, defiantly, "she 's a lady, and I 'm rather particular what kind of company she keeps. Do you suppose for a moment that you can frighten me? It is possible the combined strength of — let me see, how many are there? — twelve men can to a certain extent control the actions of one; but I 'm perfectly willing to take any one of your cut-throats single-handed, preferably yourself."

"Don't call names, Mr. Lawyer," said Day, coming up to him; "it won't do ye any good. Our horses are hitched right yonder down the lane, and if you 'll be kind enough to come along we 'll get on 'em and show ye what a pretty place we 've chosen for ye. It 's near a brook with the trees a spreading over ye, and the little birds 'll sing ye to sleep."

"Stop your damned impertinence," said Perry, in a rage, struggling with the men, and dragging them forward in his attempt to reach Day. "Your time will come later, as sure as my name is William Perry."

"That 's a nice name, Mr. Perry," said the captain, with a hoarse laugh. "I 'm glad to know it. We 're keeping a list of all of your kind, and when we begin to run this government we 'll put ye aboard a nice ship, and send ye to join your British friends across the water. Now we 'll be moving."

Perry shrugged his shoulders, and, led by the men, walked in the direction of the forest over the rough lane, and through the stony pastures. At last they found their horses, and Day and four others mounted. "Now," said the captain, "I guess it 'll be a good idea to tie him up. It ain't far, — only a little ways down by the brook. It 's

an old lumberman's shanty, and you 'll be real comfortable. Plenty to eat and drink, and a fire to warm yourself by until Cap'n Shays comes over to see ye. He 's in Rutland now, and he 's pretty busy. Sent his compliments, and says he 'll try not to keep ye waiting long. Never mind about tying him. It ain't worth while."

Perry deigned no notice of these remarks, but walked quietly along. He felt certain that he was more than a match for Day, and that he could get out of the scrape in some way, if he was only patient. What worried him most was the fact that Piper would come to Petersham in a few days and attempt to take possession of Brown's property. The blacksmith would know nothing of the proceedings, and would be sure to get himself into trouble. Every probability presented itself to Perry's mind, and he soon decided that he must act that very night at the latest.

After about half a mile's walk through the pines and hemlocks, Day stopped before a log cabin. It was a small affair, and Perry examined it carefully, as a prisoner does his gaol. It was entirely surrounded by trees, a large boulder rising to one side of it, and behind, not more than fifty yards distant, ran the brook. The cabin was hidden from the lane and he had not noticed it until he

had turned round the high boulder which completely shut it out of the view of those who might chance to pass. "Here's your house, Mr. Perry," said Day, with a military salute. "You 're better off than a good many of us in these days. What we ought to have done is to make ye sleep in the open air. But Cap'n Shays is very kind-hearted, and was afraid you 'd catch cold. Walk right in, sir."

Perry looked at him angrily, but did as he was asked. As he passed through the low door he took careful note of everything. There was a wooden bench, or stand, a three-legged stool, and a pile of straw in the corner. There was no sign of a window, and as it was now late in the afternoon, and the foliage was thick, Perry could see very little.

"Now," said Day, when they had gone in, "we 've got a candle for ye, and some bread and water. Cap'n Shays says you lawyers have sent a good many innocent people to prison, and he wants to give ye a taste of what it 's like. I 'm going to leave four gentlemen to look after ye, and I 'll tell ye for your comfort that three of 'em have recently escaped from gaol, so they 'll understand what to do. Good-night, sir. A pleasant sleep to ye, and I guess the cap'n 'll be over to see ye before long."

Perry again vouchsafed no answer, but turning

his back to the door, waited until the men had ridden away.

"I should n't mind this so much," he thought, "if I was sure that I could get out of it in time to head off Piper. How unfortunate just at this time! I 've no doubt that that mountebank was telling the truth about those gaolbirds, and I 'm not going to take any foolish risks. But I 'll get out some way before to-morrow, or everything will be lost."

The door was now closed and securely fastened on the outside, and Perry could hear the men talking and laughing. He crept on tip-toe and tried the door. There was a cessation in the conversation outside, and he heard distinctly the snapping of the lock of a gun. He immediately withdrew, and began examining the logs to see if there was any weakness in them. They were all heavy, and well-joined, and there was no possibility of his moving them. At last, making up his mind that he must wait, he sat on the stool, took the loaf of bread, and cut a piece off it with his clasp knife. Fortunately he had his flask of spirits, and a few biscuits, and with these he made his supper.

For some hours he sat in the darkness, his head on his hand, listening and thinking. Finally it seemed to him that there was something moving near the door, and the next moment it was opened

a crack, and he could see the outline of a man's head and hat. Then he heard a voice whispering:

"He 's asleep, Bill. Guess we can take a nap. I 'll set up, and we 'll take turns. If I hear anything a moving, I 'll wake ye."

The door was then closed and fastened, and Perry went to the corner and lay down on the straw for a little rest.

CHAPTER XXII.

RUTH and her father sat in the kitchen eating supper. For some weeks the girl had been more cheerful, for she had heard from Perry, and by following his advice had made her father believe that matters were mending, and that with time everything would be straightened out. The notes had been paid, but neither she nor Deacon Brown realized who had done it. Ruth had been given to understand that Piper had agreed to cancel them, and her father said, "The little rascal was scart, and didn't dare claim 'em." As to the mortgage, it had been extended, and there would be no more trouble from that source for some time to come.

As is often the case with those who wish to be kind and helpful, Perry had undertaken too much, and in the goodness of his heart had kept back from them the true facts. He had not told Ruth that the mortgage would expire in November, and neither she nor her father suspected such to be the

case. Had they known this, they would not have been surprised upon seeing two chaises driven up the road, and stopped before the shed door.

"Seems we 've got visitors, Ruth," said the blacksmith, rising, and starting for the door. "I hope it ain't none of them city folks."

Ruth rose to follow him, and then they passed through the shed. As they reached the door a low groan and an oath came from Deacon Brown, and Ruth grew faint and leaned against the casement. Getting out of the first chaise was the shrunken form of Jerry the money-lender.

"What does he want here?" growled Brown, his face flushed with anger.

"I don't know, father," gasped Ruth, clutching the side of the door. "I don't like it. See, the others are getting out, and they 're all walking this way. They 've seen you, and that dreadful man is going to speak to you."

Ruth was right. Jerry Piper advanced, followed by the others, and began to speak.

"Good-evening, Mr. Brown," he said, removing his hat, and looking up with a sardonic smile. "I 'm sorry to disturb you, but I could n't wait any longer."

"Wait for what?" said Brown, glaring at him savagely; "wait for what? Answer me quick."

"I guess you know, sir. The mortgage."

"The what?" roared the blacksmith, clenching his fists. "The mor—the—what are ye talking about?"

He stepped toward Piper, who withdrew a pace.

"I 'm talking about the mortgage which I hold on your farm here," said Jerry, taking the paper from his pocket and holding it before the blacksmith's face. "It 's overdue, and I want it paid now or —"

Deacon Brown made a dash for the paper; but the money-lender was too quick for him, and jumped to one side.

"None of this, sir," said one of the other men, stepping up between them. "I 'm the officer, and must see that there 's no trouble."

"You 're the officer?" said Brown, attempting to push the man one side. "What officer are ye? Whose officer are ye? What business has any officer on my premises? Get away from here, or I 'll strangle the lot of ye."

"Don't get excited, Mr. Brown," said the constable, firmly. "The law must be obeyed, and you must remember that acts of violence will not be tolerated now. Listen quietly to what this gentleman has to say."

"I 'll listen to no one, least to that 'ere sneaking

little thief. Take him away from here, take him away! Do ye hear me? I don't know no law or lawyers, or blood-sucking varmin."

"I 've come, Mr. Brown," said Piper, from behind the constable, "to foreclose the mortgage."

There was a scream from the shed, and Ruth rushed out and took her father by the arm. The blacksmith's face was purple, and he was trying to speak, but the words would not come. At last he put his hand to his throat, and with a final effort said in a hoarse voice, —

"By God, I 'll kill ye all! Look out for yeself, for I 'm done with patience. You 've lied to me, your lawyer 's lied to me, and I 'll kill ye, and I 'll throw your body in the corn-field for the crows to pick at."

He raised his great fist and struck at the constable. Fortunately for the latter the blow fell wide of its mark, and the officer, in a rage, called to one of the other men, —

"Put the irons on him." Then turning to the blacksmith he went on, "I have orders, sir, to arrest all rebellious and dangerous characters. Take the young woman into the house, — I can't talk with her here. I 've orders to arrest all such as oppose the laws of the Commonwealth, and you have done so. Now you are bound, and we will

proceed to business. Mr. Piper enters and takes possession of this farm for breach of the conditions of the mortgage which he has with him. The certificate will be signed by these witnesses and recorded, and I arrest you as an inciter of rebellion, and as a breaker of the laws. It 's no use, sir. Put him into the chaise. Where 's the young woman ? "

"She 's fainted, Mr. Constable, and I 've put her on the bed in one of the rooms."

"Very well, leave her. She 'll come to in a while. You have now possession, Mr. Piper, and if you say so you can remain here."

"No, thank you," said Piper. "I 'll leave the young lady in possession until she 's feeling better."

"I 've seen lots of 'em faint this way. It 's the only way to keep 'em quiet, somehow. But it ain't dangerous. She 'll know the old man 's gone when she wakes up."

While this conversation had been going on, Deacon Brown had been struggling with the two men, but had not spoken a word. His face was swollen, and his eyes bloodshot and staring. He rolled them about wildly, and his lips moved, but with no sound. At last he grew quiet, and the men got into the chaises, and drove away toward Barre.

It had now grown dark, and Ruth lay alone in the farm-house on her father's bed. She was a brave girl, and naturally strong and vigorous, and had she not been broken down by care and starvation, she could have borne up under the shock she had received on seeing Piper, and hearing what he and the constable had said. As it was, she was completely overcome, and losing consciousness she was laid upon the bed in her father's room off the kitchen.

How long she lay there she did not know, but gradually she regained her senses, and a confused sound of people talking seemed to reach her ears. She opened her eyes, but could see nothing. Then she raised herself on her elbow and listened. The sounds she had heard were caused by the blood rushing through her arteries. All at once she put her hands to her head and uttered a low cry. The whole scene was coming back to her, and she imagined she saw her father being bound and dragged away. She jumped from the bed and groped in the dark for the door. At last she found it, and pushed it open. The kitchen was dark as the bed-room. She put both her hands to her head and strained her eyes toward the window, through which the moon cast its pale light from over the tree-tops in the grove, causing the trees

in the orchard to take varied shapes in her excited imagination. Then she gave a loud cry, and felt her way toward the shed door. Like a flash the truth came to her, and she began calling wildly:

"Father! Father! Where are you? Jimmy, Abe! Help me, they have taken him from me to kill him."

She passed out on to the road, her hair hanging loose, her frock unfastened and laid back from her throat. She stopped and looked down the road, then called again, —

"Father, Jimmy! No, Jimmy 's away with Abe and can't hear me. My God, have pity on me! Where is he? Oh! I 'm so weak, so weak, and I should have been strong. Help! Help!"

Suddenly she stopped and listened. She had heard something coming over the hill beyond the valley. Surely it was the sound of a horse cantering, and she went to the middle of the road and peered down between the maples through the moonlight. The sound drew nearer, coming up the road, but Ruth could see nothing for some moments. Then she distinguished the form of a horse coming rapidly toward her, and she breathed heavily. The next moment there was a loud whinny, and Ruth saw in front of her a riderless horse. The beast dropped into a trot, then into a

walk, and finally stopped near her. Ruth wondered what it could mean. It was so dark under the trees that she could not recognize the animal, but having regained some of her strength, and being a good horsewoman, she went boldly up to its head and took the bridle. It was then that she uttered a cry of pleasure, for she now knew it. It was William Perry's mare, Molly.

"Why, it 's Molly!" said Ruth, putting her arms round the mare's neck. "You 've come to help me. Where 's your master?" she went on, with a sudden fright. "Why have you run away from him?"

For answer the mare rubbed her nose against the girl's arm.

"Will you take me to him? Come, Molly, I 'll jump on your back and we 'll go together, and you can lead me."

Without waiting a moment longer, Ruth mounted the mare, and sitting astride the saddle turned her head down the road and spoke to her, and Molly started off. Ruth had thought that perhaps she would turn in at the tavern. But no. On she went over the ledge, under the elms, down round the hill, across the brook, and through the valley. The cool night air and the vigorous exercise waked the girl, and her strength and nerve

came back as she rode along. At last they reached the steep pitch leading toward the straight stretch to Barre, and Molly slackened her speed and then stopped by the side of the road.

The moon had risen high, and Ruth could see about her clearly. She knew where she was. It was by the brook next the lane leading to Sam Barnes' wood-lot, and she had been there many times with her father and Jimmy in the winter, when they had helped haul wood. She wondered why Molly should stop at this place, but she knew there must be some reason for it. She spoke to the mare and then slid quietly to the ground. As she did so her hand struck the holster. She unstrapped it, looked in, and saw the pistol. An idea came suddenly to her, and passing her arm through the bridle she fell on her knees and examined the ground. Her conjecture had been correct. There was no question but that a body of men had been collected where she was, and but a short time before. She breathed a low exclamation, mounted the mare again, and with her right hand on the pistol, turned into the lane and rode along, watching and listening with every nerve strained. After going for a few minutes, she spoke quietly to Molly, and stopped. She was certain that she heard voices in front of

her, but as she leaned forward she could perceive nothing but the soughing of the wind through the pines, so she started forward again. In another moment she pulled in the mare once more, and this time she was convinced. To her right, beyond the boulder toward the brook, she could distinguish a man's voice. She turned to the left round behind the clump of alders, dismounted, and hitched the mare to a sapling. Then she took the pistol from the holster and crept cautiously toward the boulder.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WILLIAM PERRY lay on the straw in the corner of the log cabin, determined to sleep if possible, for he had work later in the night which would require all his strength and nerve, and he had no fear of not waking in time. He considered carefully the probability of Piper's getting to Petersham before the following day, and he decided that if the money-lender stopped in Worcester it would be almost impossible for him to arrive at the farm before the twenty-third of the month.

"If he does succeed in entering, I 'm afraid it will go hard with Brown, for it will be known that he is a sympathizer of Shays," he thought. "He 'll have hard work to get justice. Besides all this, he may be arrested, and then what will become of Ruth?"

He rolled over on the straw, and closing his eyes again he tried to sleep. He had been in this position about half an hour when he was roused

by a noise outside the logs near where he was resting. It was very slight, and he could scarcely hear it, but he thought it a footstep on the pine needles. He waited some minutes, then he heard the sound again, and rising carefully, he put his eye to the opening between the logs and watched. He could see nothing, although the rays of the moon lighted up the spaces between the trees. After waiting a short while he was about to withdraw when he saw a shadow pass across one of the moonlit spaces.

"It must be one of the men," he thought. "They 're afraid I 'll try to crawl out through this crack."

He watched a moment longer, and then lay down and tried to sleep. A little later he was again startled by the sound of footsteps, this time close to him. He raised his head and listened, and the next moment his heart stood still, and he jumped to his feet, quickly but quietly. He had recognized the voice. Soon it spoke again, and said, —

"Mr. Perry, are you here?"

William put his eye to the crack again, and saw the wild-looking figure of Ruth Brown standing in the shadow near the cabin. A low exclamation of surprise escaped him, and he answered, —

"For God's sake, what are you doing here? You 'll be seen, and they 'll maltreat you. How did you know I was here?"

"I can't tell you now. All I can say is that Molly showed me the way. I 've got both your pistols. They will pass through this crack. Take them, and if you can get out, come over among the alders opposite the boulder. I 'll wait for you there with Molly."

Perry took the pistols, and without another word Ruth crept from the shadow and was soon out of sight.

After he had taken the pistols, Perry stood a moment aghast. The whole scene had been to him like a vision, and he rubbed his eyes to be sure that he was not asleep on the straw and dreaming. Then he examined the pistols. They were as he had left them, and he saw clearly that he was awake, and that Molly had found her way to the farm as he had expected, and given warning of his danger.

"But how has she come here at this time of night, and alone?" he thought. "Something must be wrong. I will act first, and find out after I am safely out of here."

He listened a moment, and hearing nothing crossed on tiptoe to the door. He put his ear

close to it, and listened again. Still there was no sound.

"What shall I do?" he thought. "Possibly I might force the door, but that would give the alarm, and all four would soon be awake and ruin everything. But I must get the door opened some way. The fellow on guard told the others that he would call them if he heard me. How can I do it?"

He waited a moment, and reviewed the whole situation carefully.

"My only chance is to take them unawares, and before the others are roused, do up this one, and go round the boulder, whence I can handle the other three. I have it. If I use my clasp-knife and fists on the guard I shall have my two pistols left for the others. That 's what I 'll do, if I can get out."

Finally he became impatient, for he knew that Ruth was in a dangerous position, as any sound from the mare would expose her. He therefore decided that he must attract the attention of the sentinel in such a way that he would open the door to take an observation, without feeling the necessity of calling the others. Accordingly he walked somewhat heavily across the cabin, coughed twice, and yawned. Then he crept back close to the

door and waited, with his clasp-knife held tightly in his left hand.

There was a movement outside, and before long he could hear the man breathing just beyond the door. He was evidently listening, and Perry closed his mouth tightly that he should not betray himself. His heart was beating loudly as he heard the bolt slipping quietly, and then the door was opened a crack. With the agility of a panther at bay, Perry pushed the door with his shoulder, plunged his knife into the man's side, at the same time striking him a heavy blow with his fist, and before the sleepers were awakened, had dashed round the boulder into the darkness.

The young man knew very well that the alarm had been given by the time he reached the shadow of the great rock, for he could hear the wounded man's groans, and then the voices of his companions as they awoke and ran to his assistance. Perry therefore crouched down and awaited developments. From his position he could see the cabin distinctly, for the moon was now above it, casting its light upon it. Two of the men were kneeling by the prostrate form, while the third went into the shanty. He soon came out, and going up to the others said something to them. Perry could not hear what it was, but the next

moment all three got up, and ran toward the road.

"If I only had three pistols instead of two, I 'd pick 'em off," he thought. "Holloa, here comes one in my direction. I 'll fix him without wasting powder."

Before reaching the boulder the man stopped and looked about him. Then he walked slowly toward the edge of the shadow, within a few feet of where William was waiting. With a spring like a cat, Perry was upon him, and before he had time to recover himself, had him pinned to the ground with an iron grasp. After a few blows he was no longer dangerous, but his screams had attracted the attention of the other two, and they turned and started to his rescue.

The advantage was now entirely with Perry. In fact, it had been from the first, for the moment he had stabbed the man at the door and escaped behind the boulder, it had become a dangerous task for the others to attempt to recapture him. But they were desperate characters, and were stimulated by promises of reward, so they took the risk. As the two men were passing through a streak of moonlight, there was the report of a pistol, and one of them fell headlong on his face. The other stopped short, turned about, and with

the speed of a deer ran behind the cabin. A few minutes after Perry heard the sound of a horse, and looking down the lane saw the last of his opponents disappearing through the moonlight.

Perry was not yet sure that everything was safe. He had put his knife into one man, struck another, and shot a third. But any one of them might be capable of doing mischief. Then the man who had ridden away might either be in ambush, or give the alarm. He wished, if possible, to get behind the cabin and secure one of the horses, so that Ruth might ride Molly, but he was afraid to leave her alone. He first looked at the man lying next him. He was perfectly quiet. Perry shook him. He gave no signs of moving, but William knew that he was only stunned, so taking the rascal's pistol, he ran across the road to the clump of alders.

"Miss Ruth, Ruth," he called, quietly.

"I'm here and safe, Mr. Perry, and I've seen it all. Are they dead?"

"I don't know, but we have no time to lose. Can you fire a pistol?"

"I think so, sir."

"Then take this, and if any of these men come toward you, fire, but be careful and don't mistake me for one of them. I shall be on horseback."

Ruth took the pistol, and Perry ran swiftly round

the boulder and behind the cabin. In a short time Ruth saw him returning on the back of one of the rebels' horses.

"Now, Miss Ruth, jump on to Molly," he said. "Do you know any way out of here except the one by which we came?"

"Yes. Follow me. There is a path leading through the woods direct to the Barre road. Thank God I have found you."

"And I thank you, my brave girl," said Perry, tenderly. "We cannot stop to speak now, for we are not yet out of danger. When we get to a safe place we will talk."

They then rode silently on, Ruth leading the way, until in less than a quarter of an hour they descended a steep bank and were on the road to Barre. Ruth reined in Molly, and pushing her hair back from her face, looked about her. Then she turned toward Perry, and as the moonlight struck her, he noticed for the first time her terrified expression, and her dishevelled hair, and disorderly costume. He was startled, and leaning toward her, examined her carefully.

"My poor girl," he said softly, "what is the trouble? I 've been very selfish, and have thought too much of myself for the last hour. Tell me quickly! Is anything wrong at the farm? Ah! I

ought to have known it. How thoughtless I 've been."

He turned his horse in the direction of Petersham, and was about to start off without waiting for an answer, when Ruth stopped him.

"It 's no use going there, Mr. Perry," she said sadly. "They have come and taken the farm, and poor father is a prisoner."

Perry started.

"Why have n't you told me this before? Who 's taken the farm? Not Piper? Not that little thief? Speak quickly, Ruth. There is no time to lose."

"So much time has been lost already, that we can do little to-night, Mr. Perry. I was so weak, so tired out with all I 've been through, that I fainted, when I ought to have been strong and protected father. When I came to I was alone on his bed, and he was gone. Then I went out on the road, and it all came to me. When I saw Molly, I was sure that you were near, and would help me if I could find you, and my strength came back. I jumped on her back, and she has saved you."

Ruth leaned forward, and put her arms round the mare's neck. Perry thought a moment, then said, —

"Is there any one at the farm now?"

"No, at least there was no one about when I left."

"Then we will return there, and you can rest and get together such of your things as you wish. If you are strong enough we will start before sunrise. We can do nothing to-night."

It was late when they reached the farm. They both went round to the barn while Perry attended to the horses. Then they went to the house. Everything was quiet.

"Now go to your room, Ruth," said Perry, kindly. "I will sit up here, and I 'll call you before sunrise. Try to sleep. Much depends on your having strength to-morrow."

CHAPTER XXIV.

AFTER Ruth had retired, Perry went to the window, and drawing up a chair, sat with his elbow on the sill, looking out through the moonlit orchard toward the pine grove. All the events of the last few hours passed through his mind in rapid succession, and he began to realize what a narrow escape he had had, and how much he owed to the courage of the girl who had shown such presence of mind in her weak and almost helpless condition. He recalled the first time he had seen her, and then followed up all the events since that day. Suddenly he paused. He had reached the time when he had, almost by accident, turned into Ames' office on King Street. His friend's words rang in his ears, and he tried in vain to put them from his thoughts. They came back, and he could get no further.

"You 'll know before long what I mean," Ames had said.

Perry rose, went to the fire-place, and put a log on the dying embers. He sat by the fire and

watched it as it began to kindle, and the little sparks took the forms of a procession. At its head was Day, and he himself was looking out of the window watching him. Then he saw Jimmy thrown from his horse. At last Ruth's face appeared, and he started and put his hand to his eyes.

"I 'm about used up," he said, gradually collecting himself; "but I must n't sleep too much. There 's no probability of any one troubling us to-night, but I 'll keep one eye open in case of accident."

He slid down into his chair, and folding his hands and closing his eyes, again dozed. This time his thoughts returned to the log cabin, and he saw Ruth's face through the crack in the logs. She seemed to be speaking.

"I 'm here. I 've come to save you and to ask you to save me."

He sprang from his chair and looked about him. The moon had set, and the room was in utter darkness save for the fitful light of the fire. He went again to the window and looked out. The stars were shining in the heavens, but he could see nothing but the outlines of the nearest apple-trees. He turned back, and walked toward the fire. He leaned against the chimney-piece and listened. He heard nothing.

"Ruth," he whispered, "are you here? Did you speak to me?"

There was no answer, and Perry smiled. "I 'm not usually nervous," he thought, "but my imagination has got the best of me this time. I must have been dreaming, but I certainly thought I heard her speak."

He sat down in the chair again. Once more he closed his eyes, and once more rose quickly.

"Ruth, Ruth," he said aloud, "if you are not here, you are in my heart. Ames was right. I love her, I love her."

He sank back in the chair, and the tears came into his eyes.

"Yes, I love you, and I have known it a long while, but have not realized it, and have denied it. But it 's no use. What have I done for the last two months? I 've thought of nothing but you and yours; I 've neglected my work, and my mind has been only on you and how I might serve you. Yes, Ruth, I love you with all my heart, with all my life, and I will protect you and help you find your father."

Perry had now thoroughly awakened from his delusion, and the awakening seemed to have a soothing effect on him.

"Now I feel better," he thought with a smile,

wiping his eyes. "The die is cast, and I can now rest. Why have I warded it off so long? Why have I refused to believe it? Could I help loving her? My life has been very lonely, but now, God bless her, she has brought a new light into it."

With a sigh he settled himself back in his chair, and was soon sleeping quietly.

After she had left Perry, Ruth went quickly upstairs and into her bed-room. She shut the door and bolted it, and for a moment stood looking about the moonlit room. There was the table with the book of poems and the Bible. The chair was by the window, where she had left it when she had gone down to supper the night before. She sighed; the tears gushed forth from her eyes, as she threw herself on her knees and buried her head in the bed-clothes.

"Oh dear! Oh dear! Oh dear!" she sobbed. "Why have we got to suffer all this? Why does God treat us so? Surely we 've tried to live according to His laws. It is n't right! It is n't just!"

In a moment she jumped up, and shook her hair back, and went to the window.

"I 'm awfully tired," she gasped, dropping into the chair. "I can't stop to cry now. I must rest if I can, but my head aches. I 'll try though."

She went back to the bed, and threw herself upon it without undressing. She could not sleep, for a panorama of all she had been through, passed and repassed before her. From it there stood out one figure, brighter, clearer, more prominent than all the rest. There was her father, Jimmy, Abe Morse; but in the foreground stood William Perry, looking down at her with his kind, soft eyes, and pleasant smile.

"He 's so good, so kind," she thought, "no one was ever just like him. Why do I always see him? Why does he always come to me when I 'm in trouble?" Ruth sighed, and turned on her side and gazed out of the window toward Chimney Hill.

"I wonder why it is," she thought again.

Finally, as the moonlight disappeared, her eyes closed, and before long she was sleeping soundly.

She must have rested very quietly under the soothing influences of her dreams, for the next thing she knew she heard a voice calling her name. She started up in bed and called in a drowsy manner, —

"Yes, father — " she stopped and rubbed the back of her hand across her eyes. "It is n't father," she thought. "I 'd forgotten. It 's he."

She roused herself, and the voice came again.

"It 's time to be getting ready. I 've made the fire and hung the kettle. I 'll wait in the kitchen for you."

Ruth drew a long breath, and crept from her bed, dressed, did up her hair, and ran down to the kitchen. When she reached the door, she hesitated; her eyes dropped, and she courtesied. Perry had lighted the candle, and stood watching the door, waiting for her. When he saw her he started forward, but as she stopped, he did the same, and took hold of the back of the chair.

"Good-morning, Miss — Miss Ruth," he said slowly.

"Good-morning, sir," answered Ruth, stepping forward and putting out her hand. William came quickly to her, and took it in both of his.

"I hope," he said with some hesitation, "that you have rested, and feel able to take a journey to-day."

Ruth looked up at him, and catching his expression, dropped her eyes again.

"You don't speak, Ruth," he said gently, drawing her toward him. "Are n't you well? Are you afraid to be here alone with me?"

Ruth raised her eyes and looked full into his.

"No, I 'm not afraid to be here alone with you. I should be afraid if you were not here."

Perry took a step forward and looked at her closely.

"Then you trust me?" he said quickly.

"Do I trust you? How can you ask me that? Have I not trusted you since I first saw you?"

"You have, you have, Ruth," he exclaimed, drawing her to him and kissing her on the forehead, "and I love you for it."

Ruth made no answer, but putting her head upon his shoulder, wept bitterly.

"I 've known it for a long, long time, Ruth dear," said William, stroking her head tenderly, "but something has kept it back until last night as I sat here watching the fire. Then it all came to me. There, quiet yourself now. I love you, and will care for you if you 'll let me."

Ruth looked up at him with tears in her eyes.

"I will let you, sir," she said gently. "God has been good to send you to me, and I 'm very grateful."

A few moments later, Ruth was busy preparing breakfast, while William had gone to the barn to care for the horses. When he returned, dawn was beginning to creep over the hills, and he hurried through the shed.

"Ruth dear," he said brightly, "make a little package of such things as you will need on our

journey. Have everything ready, for we must start as soon as we have eaten breakfast. Do you know the way round the other road, — the one leading north?"

"Yes. It winds through the pastures to Gerry and Templeton."

"Then we 'll take it, for I think it will be safer. Shays and Day are in Rutland, and we must avoid them. I feel so happy this morning, Ruth dear," he went on, going forward and taking both her hands and kissing her.

"And I feel very happy, too, sir," said Ruth, sweetly.

"Then we 'll start," William replied with a laugh; "and don't worry about your father or the farm. I 'll promise you that something can be done in both cases. Now I 'll get the horses, and we 'll be off."

It was about half an hour after this that William Perry and Ruth Brown rode up the narrow road. The sun had risen, but was not yet visible over the tree-tops, and the fields and evergreens were white with a glistening frost, for the night had been cold. On their right were the fields dipping down to the brook among the woods, beyond which were the pine-covered hills. To their left was the mowing rolling down, then up toward Petersham

village, whose white spire reflected the morning sunlight. In a few minutes they reached the brow of the hill, and the snow-clad summit of Monadnock burst upon their sight over the pastures. When they had passed over the rough and stony way as far as the crest of the next hill, they stopped and looked back at the farm, which stood out clearly, backed by Chimney Hill. Ruth's eyes filled, and with a sigh, she wheeled about, and they started on again.

At last they turned east and rode toward the little town of Gerry. This they passed on the knoll to the left, and descending a steep path, drew rein to get a glimpse of the lovely view before them. Over the frozen surface of a pretty lake, shut in on either side by firs and pines, they saw the graceful form of Mount Monadnock, rising high above the surrounding hills, its peak and clefts white and prismatic, like a great diamond in a satin casket. The turquoise sky above it was unbroken by clouds, and the two young people drank in the picture without a word. They touched their horses, and were soon climbing the road to Templeton.

CHAPTER XXV.

IT was the end of November, and General Brooks with his Middlesex and Suffolk regiments was scouring the country about Concord in search of Job Shattuck and his marauding bands. Shays and Day were hovering between Worcester and Rutland, and the whole central and western part of the Commonwealth was in an uproar, for the rebellion had got well under way, and whole villages had turned out in support of the insurgents. Governor Bowdoin had called out the militia, and had reviewed the troops under General Brooks in Cambridge, clad in a white broadcloth coat, scarlet small-clothes, white wig, and cocked hat.

For the time being, Springfield and the country about it had become less openly active, and the centre of the rebels' operations had been transferred to Worcester and Concord, where they were not confining themselves to concerted action, but were roaming about the country in little bands, burning, robbing, and in some cases inflicting personal injury. Such was the apprehension of

government, that Governor Bowdoin sent to General Lincoln, advising him that if the rebellion was not soon ended, he should call upon him to take command of the militia and quell it.

General Brooks marched through Weston to Lincoln, and when he had reached Concord, Shattuck had fled. It was about this time that a young man and a young woman were riding through the woods in the outskirts of Groton. William Perry had decided to take Ruth to Boston, and to put her under the care of friends until he could find out for her where her father was imprisoned, and see Jerry Piper. He felt sure that he could arrange matters satisfactorily with the latter. As to Deacon Brown, he knew that it might be a long task to find him. Perry had made up his mind that the officers Piper had taken with him to the farm, were of that class who would, for money, abuse their legal powers, and that the villanous little money-lender would do everything possible to have the poor blacksmith put out of sight. There had been many unjust imprisonments during the past few months, and at the present time there was even more chance of them than there had been heretofore. Perry thought of all these things, and laid his plans for overcoming them.

"Ruth dear," he said, looking up suddenly,

"it won't be much longer before we get where we can do something. You have been very brave, and I 'm proud of you."

"Why should n't I be brave with you?" answered Ruth, turning toward him with a smile. "I feel well and happy now, and I know that you 'll be able to fix everything."

"I 'll try to, Ruth. I know what to do with Piper, but it may take time to find your father. But I don't think you need worry about him — that is, I don't think he 'll be maltreated."

"Where do you think he is?" asked Ruth, anxiously.

"I think it probable that he has been taken to Boston, in which case I can get his release easily. If he is anywhere else it will be more difficult, but we will accomplish it."

Ruth was silent for some time after this, but at last asked, —

"Where are you going to take me?"

"To an old friend of my father's, Ruth. He and his good wife will be kind to you and do everything for you."

"Where do they live?"

"In Dorchester, just beyond Boston. They are also great friends of his excellency's, and will use their influence with him in our behalf."

"Are you sure that they 'll want me?" asked Ruth, timidly. "I 'm only a poor country-girl, and they may n't want me."

"You 're a dear good girl, Ruth, and you need have no fears. I was with them just after I first saw you, three months ago, and I spoke about your father and his troubles, and they will remember what I said. We must be quiet now, for I hear some one coming up the road."

They were now passing through a densely wooded stretch, and as the road was winding they could see but a short distance in front of them. William's sharp ears, however, had detected the sound of galloping horses coming in their direction, and he pulled in his horse, and motioned to Ruth to do the same.

"Come back behind the trees, quickly, Ruth," said William, excitedly. "I don't like the sound. There 's some trouble, or they would n't be going at that rate. Holloa! they 're shouting. Some one is being chased, and we 're out of the way just in time."

Perry was right. They had scarcely reached a sheltered spot, when they heard the sound of the approaching horses just below them round a curve in the road. For two hours past it had been snowing, and the ground was already white. The wind

had increased steadily, and Perry was anxious to reach the highway to Concord as quickly as possible, for Ruth was none too warmly dressed, and he feared lest in her weary and worn condition, she should get ill. As they waited under the trees, the snow began to fall faster and faster, and the wind to howl louder and louder, and Perry became impatient to be moving on.

"Be as still as you can, Ruth. See, it 's some one going for his life!" whispered William, in excitement. "There 's another, and another. There are three of them, and by the noise behind they are closely followed by a large number. Who can they be? Listen, one of 'em is shouting."

Just as they were passing, the leader turned his head and called back, —

"Go it, Job, for God's sake. They 're on to us."

The next moment there was a loud report, and a scream from one of the fugitives as he fell from his horse. All at once his two companions stopped, wheeled about, and came back to him. Drawing their pistols they levelled them at the approaching cavalcade.

Ruth and William sat with bated breath, watching the two men as they remained like statues by the side of their fallen comrade, who had suc-

ceeded in raising himself on his elbow, and had drawn his pistol.

"They 're brave men, even if they are rebels," said Perry, quietly. "I hope they 'll be taken without any more shooting." The men waited but a few seconds, but it seemed minutes to Ruth and William. At last their pursuers came in sight, and with a yell of triumph, dashed down upon the three men.

"It 's the mounted militia, Ruth, and that 's a colonel at their head. They 're stopping, and I think the leader is going to speak."

Perry was not mistaken, for the next moment he and Ruth heard the following, —

"We 've had a long chase, Job Shattuck, but now we 've got you sure enough. Put down your pistols, you two. We don't want any unnecessary blood shed. The odds against you are too great, and you might as well surrender."

"Colonel Wood," said the man on the ground, "you ain't going to take Job Shattuck as easy as ye think. If ye want a corpse ye 'll be likely to get one, and maybe more, unless ye turn about and leave us alone. We 're only three, and you 've pricked me in the leg; but my hand 's pretty steady, and my eyes are open, so be careful."

"Will you put down your arms or not?" roared the colonel.

"We won't. Ain't that plain enough answer, colonel? And what 's more, if ye don't do as I say, there 'll be three bullets going in among ye, by God."

"Then take what you deserve, you damned rebel," shouted Wood, whipping out his pistol, and discharging it at Shattuck. At the same time there were several reports and two or three screams. When the smoke had cleared away, William and Ruth saw the cavalcade surrounding the three men, a second of whom was now writhing on the ground. One of the militia was also down, and two of his companions were bending over him.

"You rascals," said Wood, as the rebels were disarmed and captured, "you 've been running a great rig about Middlesex lately, but I guess your course is ended. My orders were to bring you to Boston dead or alive, Job Shattuck, and I don't know which it 'll be when we get there, and I don't care, except that I 'd like the pleasure of seeing you hung. Take 'em along," he called to the men who had the prisoners. "It won't hurt 'em. If it does they 'll have to stand it."

"Ruth," said William, after a moment's reflection, "these militiamen are all gentlemen and good citizens, and are doing their duty. The storm is increasing, and we must move on. I am going

to speak to the colonel and ask him to let us go with him."

"Just as you say," answered Ruth. "You know what is best. I begin to feel the cold, and would like to get to some house as soon as possible."

"Very well," said William, "wait here for me."

He rode out from under the trees, and up to the colonel. The latter looked at him a moment suspiciously, but then smiled.

"You 've seen quite a battle, sir," he said, pleasantly.

"I have," answered Perry, "and I must say that considering the odds against them, your opponents were plucky. But I 'm glad you 've got 'em. I 've come to ask you if I and the young lady with me may go with you. Travelling seems to be a doubtful pleasure just at present, and in this storm I 'm not sure that I could find my way."

"We 're going on to Concord this afternoon, and you may come with pleasure. Where 's the young lady?"

"Ruth," called Perry, "come. We 're going with these gentlemen."

Ruth rode out, and the colonel bowed and looked at her.

"Why, you must be cold. You look pale," he

said kindly. "That coat is not enough. Here," he called to one of his men, "get the lady a cloak. There, that 's better. We 've got a fifteen mile ride. Do you think you can stand it?"

"Yes, sir," answered Ruth, "thanks to your kindness."

"Then we 'll be off. The snow 's beginning to drift, and if this keeps on we 'll have to stop on the way. But I want to hand my prisoners over to Hitchburn to-night, if possible."

"I 'm very much obliged to you, sir," said Perry, warmly. "What 's all this trouble? I 've been up in the country for some days, and did n't know of the excitement here."

"This rascal, Shattuck, has been giving us a deal of trouble lately. He broke up the court in Concord, and when we approached that town, got out of the way, and we 've been hunting for him ever since. Now we 've got all the ringleaders in this part of the country, and if we can only do as well with Shays, we shall have peace in a short time. I really believe, though, that this fellow is the worst of the lot. Did you see how he held out? He 's a desperate villain, and we 're lucky to get him."

"He certainly showed courage," answered Perry.

"Courage!" said Wood. "Why, the man has at least three wounds. He was hit half an hour before you saw him, but stuck to his horse as if he had been glued to it, and never uttered a sound. I don't see how he ever missed me, and I 'd made up my mind that I was going to get it. But I did n't, and I 'm thankful."

The storm was now raging violently, and the snow beat in their faces so that they could hardly see the road in front of them. Had Ruth been brought up anywhere but in the highlands of New England, she could never have stood that journey. But she was accustomed to the severe winter weather of her native Petersham, and wrapped in the warm military cloak, she braved the storm as well as the men.

It was growing dark as they drew near Concord, and Perry rode up to the colonel and said, —

"Can you tell me, sir, of a quiet place where Miss Brown can spend the night with some lady? She is very tired, and has been through a good deal of excitement lately, and needs a good rest."

"Of course I can," answered Wood, graciously. Then turning, he called: "Captain Stone, come here, please."

A middle-aged man rode up and saluted.

"Yes, sir."

"Is Mrs. Stone in Concord?"

"Yes, colonel."

"Will you do me the kindness to take this young lady to your house for the night, and make her comfortable?"

"With the greatest pleasure, colonel. If you'll excuse me from further duty to-night, I'll lead them to the house directly. It's only about half a mile from here, round to the left."

"Thank you very much," said Perry, warmly.

"Not at all, not at all," answered the captain, cheerily. "I thank you for giving me a chance to get home. Good-evening, colonel, we turn here."

William and Ruth thanked Wood sincerely for his kindness, and following Captain Stone, in the course of fifteen minutes stopped before a small house just to the north of Concord village.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WHEN the news of the capture of Shattuck reached Boston, there was great rejoicing among the friends of government, and Governor Bowdoin was congratulated on all sides for the promptness and firmness with which he had succeeded in putting down the insurrection in the eastern part of the Commonwealth. There had been much anxiety in Boston, and at one time much apprehension lest Shattuck and Shays should meet at Cambridge with a large and dangerous force, and perhaps even cause disturbances in Boston itself. But the pluck and energy of Colonel Wood and his little band of Groton horse had broken up the rebel forces in Middlesex, and so the danger from that source was ended.

Fisher Ames heard the news just before he was about to start for his home in Dedham, and he was overjoyed, for he was convinced that all the troubles would now be quieted, an outcome for which he with all patriotic citizens devoutly prayed.

As he rode over the Neck on his way to Dedham late in the afternoon, it suddenly occurred to him that the news would probably not yet have reached Mr. Minot, and he decided to stop at that gentleman's house and inform him of it.

It was a clear cold winter's day, unusually so for November, and the storm which had passed over central and northern Massachusetts the day before had been felt severely in Boston and its vicinity. The ground was covered with snow, and the waters of Dorchester Bay near the shore were frozen. Ames had thought much of Perry during the last few days. He was very fond of the young man, as were all who were associated with him, and he felt sorry that he should have become entangled in what he considered an unfortunate affair. To be sure, Perry was the son of a farmer, and had gained his position in his profession by his own talents and exertions; but Ames thought it a pity that the young man should be entrapped by the daughter of a Petersham rebel, for he had no doubt that such was the case.

As Ames rode toward the Minot house, Perry again came into his mind, for he associated him with his last visit there three months before, when Governor Bowdoin and General Lincoln had heard from the young man's lips the account of the Hat-

field convention, and of Shays and his doings in the west. How much had happened in those three months, Fisher Ames knew as well as any one. Instead of growing better, the condition of affairs in the Commonwealth had become steadily worse, and it had seemed that a second Revolution was inevitable, until the good news came from Concord. Of course there was much to be done yet, but this success of government would dishearten the rebels, and lead to their eventual disruption.

When a little later he wound along the road to the house, the sun was setting, and the hills, river, and harbor were rose and pink in its dying rays. He rode to the stable, and seeing Sammy, left his horse in the boy's care, and walked round to the front door and knocked. He felt a pleasurable excitement at the prospect of being the first to bring the good news to his father's old friend. In a moment the door was opened, and he stood before Mr. Minot.

"Ah, my dear boy," said the latter, extending his hand, "I'm delighted to see you. I could not have been better pleased."

"Thank you, sir," said Ames, smiling, "and I am overjoyed at being able to bring you good news. Shattuck's captured, and the rebellion's quelled."

"I know it, I know it, Fisher," said Mr. Minot, cheerfully. "Is n't it splendid?" Ames looked at his friend in amazement, and somewhat disappointedly.

"You have already heard it then, sir?" he said, inquiringly. "Then you've just come from Boston? I only learned it a short time before leaving there."

"No, Fisher, I 've been at home all day, but the news was brought to me by a friend of mine about an hour ago. He 's a friend of yours also, and has spoken of you, and will be charmed to see you."

"Who is it, Mr. Minot?"

"William Perry. He has just arrived from the scene of action, and has given us full particulars. But don't stand at the door this way. What am I thinking of?"

They passed into the hall, and then Mr. Minot said, —

"A glass of Madeira, Fisher, to warm you, and to the health of his excellency. He 's handled this affair with consummate skill, and deserves great credit. Come into the dining-room; Mrs. Minot is in the parlor. I 'll not take you to her at present."

"Where 's Perry?" asked Ames, looking about as if expecting to see his friend.

"He 's — he 's engaged, I think, at present," answered the host, with a little embarrassment. "Probably in his room. Have a glass of wine, and I 'll just look him up. You see, Fisher, he 's had a long trip, and is about worn out. You 're in no hurry?"

"None whatever, sir. Don't disturb him. I can wait."

"Very well, then. Of course you wish to see him, and he desires to see you, but —" and he hesitated, "perhaps there 's no harm in my telling you, Fisher, for he has told me that he intends speaking to you about it — he 's not alone."

"Not alone?" said Ames, quickly, a sudden light coming into his eyes as he noticed Mr. Minot's strange and reserved manner. "Who 's with him?"

"A young lady, Fisher," said Mr. Minot, throwing off his hesitancy. "Perhaps I ought to have left it to him to inform you, but my house is not very large, and you 're not a fool! Yes, he has brought the young woman from the Petersham farm, and she is a sweet good girl, I am sure. That is why I brought you here instead of taking you directly to Mrs. Minot in the parlor."

Ames thought a moment, with a doubtful expression in his eyes. Then he said slowly, —

"You — you don't think there is anything wrong about this, do you, Mr. Minot?"

"No, my boy. He has told us all about it, and it's perfectly honorable and straightforward. But as I said, I'll leave it to him to tell you his story. He's also in the parlor. Now that I've broken the ice I'll call him. He knows that you are here, for he saw you ride by the window."

"This is very strange," answered Ames. "I don't quite understand it."

"He'll clear it all up for you, Fisher. Believe me, there is nothing doubtful about it. It's a very sad case, and William has acted manfully."

"I believe you," said Ames, his face lighting up with a bright smile, "and I'd like to see him."

Mr. Minot crossed the hall, and went quietly into the parlor. After he was gone, Fisher Ames put his chin in his hand and looked out of the window toward the well, and thought, —

"At first I was afraid he'd run away with her, but Mr. Minot seems to know about it, and it must be all right. Ah! here he comes. — Well, I'm glad to see you, Perry."

The young man took his hand and smiled.

"And I consider it very fortunate that you should have stopped here to-day. Mr. Minot has told me that you know who is here. It's all very

easily explained, Ames. I tried to get to Petersham ahead of that little snake, Piper, but I was detained on the road."

"What do you mean? You were not waylaid by the rebels?"

"Indeed I was, and had it not been for Ruth and Molly, I probably should not be here now. Listen, I will tell you about it."

As William proceeded with his story, Ames' face lost its anxious expression. At last he said, —

"I 'm much relieved by what you tell me, Perry. You must acknowledge that for a young man to turn up thus unexpectedly with a young lady might appear strange. Now that you have explained it, I think you have done right, and you were wise in bringing her here."

"Now, Ames, I want to ask you about this matter of Piper's," said Perry, a few moments later. "In your judgment, can he now maintain possession, or can I take up the mortgage?"

Ames thought a moment, and answered, —

"Do you think that Piper cares to hold the property, if he can get the money?"

"I really don't know, but I 'm inclined to believe that he does. He was quite anxious to foreclose, and made no overture for a settlement."

"All you 've got to do is to make tender of the

amount due on the mortgage and bring a bill for redemption. Last year's statute is clear enough."

"Besides this," said Perry, "the entry was not peaceable. Far from it. The old man was forced into it, and given no chance to speak. On the whole, there cannot be much trouble from this source, for I 've put aside the money to redeem with. It 's about Deacon Brown that I 'm most anxious. What do you advise doing in his case?"

"In the first place, get an order for his pardon and release. Come in to my office to-morrow, and we 'll go together to his excellency. This part will be easy enough. Then you 'll have to hunt him up. Do not believe, Perry, that this is the fault of government. The officers had their orders and their duty to perform, and you 'll allow that Mr. Brown has been disloyal and was very hard to deal with. Yet I 'm inclined to think that Piper was careful to get the most unscrupulous officers he could find, and that the old man has been well hidden. Jerry thinks that by doing this he will remove all opposition to his claim, but he 's mistaken."

"I thank you very much for your advice," said Perry, with a grateful smile. "You 'll excuse me if I don't present you to Ruth to-night. The poor

girl is thoroughly exhausted, and Mrs. Minot says she must see no one, and rest."

"Of course, Perry, I did n't expect to see her now, although I shall hope to before long. I must be going. Don't disturb Mr. Minot. I 'll slip away quietly, and you can make my excuses to him. I 'll pass along the Neck at about eight o'clock to-morrow morning, and if you 'll meet me at the corner of the road we can ride in together. I 'll wait there for you, and you can do the same for me, in case you arrive first. Good-night, my boy. I appreciate everything, and under all the circumstances, you have acted well, and just as I 'd have expected of you. Tell Miss Brown to keep a brave heart, and we 'll straighten everything."

With a warm pressure of the hand, William bade Ames good-night. He stood at the window and watched him as he rode away.

"What a man he is!" thought Perry. "If they were all like him, what a country this would be!"

"Well, my dear boy," said Mr. Minot's voice behind him, "so Fisher 's gone without bidding me good-night?"

"Yes, sir, he left his apologies."

"No need of them, not in the least. It was I who left him. Now, William, I advise you to go to bed. Mrs. Minot and Miss Ruth have already gone,

and you look as if a good night's rest would do you no harm. I 've got some writing to do, so will sit here for a little while. Good-night."

"Good-night, Mr. Minot. I have asked a good deal of you, but you 've done it so kindly, that I see that I made no mistake in coming to you."

"And to whom else would you go?" said the host, taking the young man's hands. "Your father was a very dear friend of mine, and I 've watched you with interest and pride ever since you were a little urchin running about the farm feeding the hens. We live very quietly here, William, and Miss Ruth may stay with us as long as you and she wish it. I presume you 'll have to be away much of the time?"

"I go with Ames to-morrow to make arrangements. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Good-night, sir."

It was scarcely eight o'clock when William closed his eyes and began to sleep peacefully. Ruth was already dreaming, and in the stable Molly's head was beginning to droop, as she wondered what all this excitement was about, anyway.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON the brow of Beacon Hill, there stood a century ago the massive brick mansion occupied by Governor James Bowdoin, set back from Beacon Street, as was the residence of Peter Faneuil to the north and that of Bromfield to the south. At the date of this story, Mr. Bowdoin had owned the estate for thirty years, having purchased it of John Erving in 1756. Like the houses about it, it was square, three stories high, with a railing round the roof. It was approached through a gate and a long flight of steep stone steps, broken about midway between street and door by a platform, a sort of resting place for those whose legs were weary in the ascent, or for those whose heads had become dizzy with the generous hospitality of the host, and who on occasions found the descent a perilous one.

On the morning after the receipt of the news of Shattuck's defeat and capture, Governor Bowdoin and General Lincoln sat in the study by the ma-

hogany table, discussing the situation and a bottle of Madeira. The faces of both wore a relieved expression, the governor's because he was pleased to think the rebellion was near its end; the general's because he felt that now he would not be called upon to take command, and march, Heaven knew where, to suppress the insurgents. With his arm resting on the table, Governor Bowdoin was speaking.

"Brooks and Wood have done splendidly, Lincoln, and if Shepard only does as well, we'll soon be through our troubles. What do you think of the outlook?"

Lincoln looked up in his stolid way, and with no change of expression, as he answered, —

"I think as soon as the ringleaders are shot we'll have peace. The sooner, the better."

"I'm inclined to agree with you, Lincoln, but I'm not sure that it would not be better policy to treat them as rebellious children. An offer of pardon now might bring them to terms."

"Umph," said Lincoln, raising his shoulders. "I suppose that would apply as well in the case of all murderers and criminals. Why not pardon 'em all and turn 'em loose on the community? No, sir. No pardon."

"You mean, as regards the leaders? Of course

it would be best to deal leniently with those whom they have deluded and misled."

"That 's for your excellency to decide. If you ask my opinion, I advise teaching 'em all a lesson."

"I have heard that Shays promises to renew his allegiance to government if a full pardon is accorded him. Would it not be wise to take advantage of this?"

"No, sir," said Lincoln, shortly. "He has about as much regard for his oath as a Malay pirate. Don't trust him or any of 'em. A pound of shot or a good hempen rope is the only agreement which will bind Shays."

"You don't seem to have great confidence in your fellow-countrymen," said the governor, with a smile. "But I suppose you 're right. We 've been very lenient toward them, and they 've abused it. However, we can't hang the whole community. We must draw the line somewhere. Where would you draw it?"

"I can't say, sir. It 's hard to tell until we know more of the facts. But I should continue to use a firm hand until the last vestige of rebellion is stamped out. Then we can decide."

"I hear that Shays is hovering between Rutland and Worcester, and having a pretty clear field. He intended coming into Middlesex, but

will undoubtedly abandon the idea now that we have broken up his allies in that county."

"I don't know," answered Lincoln. "You never can tell what these fellows will do. Holloa, here comes Ames up the steps. I can see him over the hedge. Who 's with him?"

Governor Bowdoin rose, went to the window, and looked down toward the stone wall, over the grass plot.

"That 's young Perry," he said, as he passed out through the hall and opened the door. "Well, well," he said pleasantly as the young men reached the last step, "come in. General Lincoln is here, and we were congratulating ourselves on the news."

"Perhaps your excellency does n't know that our friend Perry was in at the death?" said Ames, looking at Perry with a smile.

"You don't say so, Ames. I 'm glad to see you, William; come in."

"Now," said the governor to Perry, after the two young men had exchanged greetings with General Lincoln, "tell us about it. How did you happen to be on hand? I thought you were in Boston."

"It was entirely by accident, your excellency," said Perry, with a little hesitation. "I had been

up in the country on business, and was passing through the woods in Groton, and happened upon them."

"Were you alone? It 's rather dangerous travelling in the interior."

"No, your excellency, I was not alone, and that 's why I 've come to see you. I hope I 'm not interrupting you."

"Not in the least. The general and I were simply talking matters over in a quiet way."

"The fact is," began Ames, seeing Perry's hesitancy, "we 've come to ask a favor of you, sir. Mr. Perry has just arrived from Petersham, and there has been a case of what seems to us an unnecessary use of authority. An old farmer who had mortgaged his estate in Boston has been arrested and secreted, because he opposed the mortgageor and the officers when they attempted to enter. It 's a very hard case, sir, and Perry will tell you about it if you 'll permit it."

"With pleasure, William," said Mr. Bowdoin, smiling at his young friend. "The general will also be glad to hear you."

General Lincoln nodded his approval, and William proceeded. When he had reached the point where he had been stopped by Day, Lincoln looked up and said, —

"You 'd better pardon him, your excellency. It might reform him."

Mr. Bowdoin took the sally pleasantly, and laughed.

"You 're too tender-hearted, Lincoln," he said.

When Perry had finished his story he waited for the governor to speak, which he did finally thus, —

"There is no intention on the part of government to be unjust or unnecessarily severe, but you understand how difficult it is for us to act in the present crisis without sometimes going further than we would wish. This case is a hard one, and the young lady has shown great courage and character, and I will order this blacksmith's release. Do you know where he is imprisoned?"

"No, your excellency."

"Then I 'll give you the order, and it will be obeyed when you find him, for the General Court have vested me with this power in the case of political criminals. I do this on your own account, William, but I could not refuse Mr. Ames in any event. We owe too much to him already, to hesitate to grant anything he may ask."

"You are too flattering, your excellency," said Ames, bowing modestly. "I 've done nothing to merit especial favor, but I do think you have

acted rightly in this case. I thank you for doing as you have."

"I feel that you've done me a great personal kindness, sir," said Perry, warmly. "Had I not been sure of your good heart and clear judgment, I should have hesitated to ask this favor of you. But I was sure that you would understand the true state of the case, and so I accepted Ames' invitation to come with him to call on you this morning. I thank you sincerely, sir."

While this conversation was going on General Lincoln sat in silence. It was evident from his expression that he did not fully approve of Governor Bowdoin's leniency, but being a good soldier he did not presume to interfere with the commands of his superior officer. He sat with his mouth firmly set and his eyebrows raised, the picture of dogged obstinacy.

When the two young men were gone, the governor returned and sat down opposite the general, and watched him a moment, then spoke, —

"Fine fellows, both of them, Lincoln. Ames is uncommonly brilliant, and will make his mark. I'm glad to be able to do something for them."

"It's all right, I suppose, governor," said the general, a little sourly. "But if you begin this thing, where are you going to stop?"

"It's very evident that Perry is interested in this young woman," answered the governor, "and you heard the story. It was certainly a hard case."

"Have you heard anything from Shepard lately?" asked Lincoln, dropping the subject of Perry and the blacksmith abruptly.

"Yes. He's still in Springfield, and is awaiting developments. I have just received a letter from the sheriff of Worcester that it will be dangerous for the courts to sit there this week. I shall consult the Council on this matter, but my inclination is to advise the justices to adjourn to the end of January. By that time everything will be quiet, and such action will prevent bloodshed."

"I agree with you this time, your excellency," said Lincoln, rising. "There's no use in giving 'em the opportunity of doing mischief. If there is n't any court there can't be any cause for attempting to stop it."

"You 're not going yet?"

"With your permission, yes. I 've promised to be home to dinner, and I see my sleigh at the gate. If you need me, your excellency, I shall be at your service, but I hope you 'll get along without me. As I've told you several times I 'm getting lazy."

"And as I 've often mentioned to you, you 're too modest, Lincoln."

"Call it modesty or laziness, whichever you wish. It 's all one, and the fact is I want to stay at Hingham and look after the farm."

"Good-day then, general. I, too, hope I 'll not have to call on you, but I shall do so if it becomes necessary. Good-bye. I thank you for coming in."

General Lincoln felt his way carefully down the slippery steps, and a few moments later was leaning back in his sleigh wrapped in furs, bound for Hingham.

Governor Bowdoin went back to the dining-room with a smile on his face.

"He 's a queer character," he thought, "and I don't know him yet. But I 'm sure of one thing: if he decides to do anything, he 'll accomplish it, even were the skies to fall upon him."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WILLIAM PERRY and Fisher Ames walked down Beacon and Treamount streets, and at last into the former's office on King Street. Here they discussed the matter of the mortgage further, and after William had placed the five hundred and fifty dollars, the principal and interest due on the note, in Ames' hands, and the latter had agreed to begin proceedings for the redemption of the farm, he mounted the horse he had borrowed that morning of Mr. Minot, and started off toward Dorchester.

William seemed like his old self as he trotted along over the snow, and he whistled and sang, and was in a very contented frame of mind. He had accomplished much that morning, and he was impatient to get to Ruth and tell her what he had done. He felt a little guilty at his selfishness, but he was so happy in his own prospects, that the fact that the poor old blacksmith might at that very moment be ill and suffering in a

prison, lost some of its effect upon him. He had fully decided, however, what he would do. It had now become evident to him that Piper would not have sent the blacksmith to Boston, and he had made up his mind to go directly from Dorchester to Worcester after seeing Ruth, and telling her of what had been done. Brown was more likely to be about there than anywhere else.

Mr. and Mrs. Minot had gone out, and Ruth sat watching at the parlor window for William's return. When she saw him ride up, she ran to the door and opened it. She knew at once by his manner that he had been successful, and the tears came to her eyes.

"Here, Sammy," called Perry, "come and take the horse. Give him a good dinner." After the boy was gone he continued, taking Ruth by both hands, and kissing her: "It's all right, dear. The governor has given me the order of release, and Ames is going to attend to the mortgage. Where are Mr. and Mrs. Minot?"

"They 've gone out to dinner."

"Then I 'll dine with you as early as it is convenient for them to give us something. I 'm off for Worcester to-night. We have come to the conclusion that your father must be somewhere near there."

Ruth's face lengthened.

"I don't like to have you go there," she said anxiously. "I feel sure that they 'll see you, and you won't have me to look you up."

"Don't worry, Ruth dear. I 'm going to take precautions this time. I 'll tell you just how I 'm going, and you will see that I intend keeping out of the way of my old friends."

"How are you going?"

"In the first place let me tell you that our friends, Shays and Day, are between Worcester and Rutland, and do not dare come farther east, nor farther south. When they move next it will be toward Springfield, and as the court does not sit there until the end of December, I ought to be able to keep clear of them."

"Then you 're going south of Worcester?"

"Yes. I shall go through Dedham, Holliston, Upton, and Sutton, whence I shall try to learn what I can. If I go to Worcester, I shall do so by night, and be careful."

"You are very good to me," she said, "and I don't feel as if I deserved it."

"Yes, you do, dear," said William, clasping her tenderly in his arms. "I 've told you that I love you, my darling, and I have good reasons for believing that you care a little for

me. Therefore I can't see but that everything is all right."

"When will you be back?" asked Ruth, as Perry was mounting Molly after dinner.

"I can't say, Ruth. I sha'n't come until I have found your father, or at least learned where he is. Good-bye, and God bless you, and care for you. Explain to Mr. and Mrs. Minot why I have left so unceremoniously."

Ruth watched him until he was out of sight, then turned and went into the house.

William Perry took the journey very easily. In the first place he wanted to examine every town through which he passed, and besides this Molly had been worked hard of late, and he realized that he might be obliged to travel long and far before he accomplished his mission. As he passed through Dedham he was reminded of his last visit there, and of Ames' parting warning, "beware the dairy-maid."

"Well," he thought, with a smile of satisfaction, "I 'm decidedly glad I did n't heed it. Ames' advice is generally sound, but in this instance he made a mistake."

He rode on for some time, thinking of little save the country about him, for his mind was in a way relieved, and he had decided to take

things quietly. In some places the snow had drifted badly, and the roads were unbroken, so that it was growing dark before he reached the little village of Holliston, where he put up for the night in a farm-house. Perry took nearly three days to get to Ward, a small town five miles south of Worcester, on French River. Everything had seemed peaceful along the road, and the contrast with his previous journeys was very marked in this respect. He thought what a strange thing chance was. There was no especial reason why he should have returned from Springfield through Petersham three months before, but how it had changed his whole life! He had only taken that route for a diversion, and he had certainly found one, and a very serious one.

The people in the village south of Worcester told him that they had had no trouble from the insurgents. Once or twice small bands had passed through their farms, but had done very little damage. Shays himself had not been there, for he had other and more important business, and at the present time his attention was on Worcester, where the court was to sit on the following day, Monday, the fourth of December.

"I guess I 'll go right on in the morning," thought Perry. "The excitement will be such

that they 'll not notice me, and I can find some officer of the court who can give me information. I 'll leave Molly here and walk over. It 's only five miles."

When Perry went to bed that night the sky was overcast, and the wind was rising from the northeast.

"Am I going to be caught in another snowstorm?" he wondered, as he blew out the candle and went to bed. The farm-house in which he was passing the night was a small one, and loosely built, and as the wind increased, it seemed to the young man that the roof under which he was resting would be raised bodily, and hurled into the forest across the road. More than once he was wakened by a creaking sound, followed by a low moan, as the wind swept down the chimney. Finally, however, he fell asleep.

It was early when he woke, and jumping out of bed, went to the window. He stopped in amazement, and uttered an exclamation. Perry had seen many snowstorms, but none like this had ever pictured itself in his imagination. Piled high over the road and fences, the drifts rose up against the side of the house nearly to the window of his room. The very trees of the grove on the hill opposite seemed wellnigh buried, and the snow was falling

in great dry flakes, twisted and turned about in the roaring tempest. Perry watched a moment, then smiled.

"Now I 'm in for it," he thought, as he turned back into his room and began to dress. "I 'm lucky to be here and not on the road, and I 'm glad not to be boxed up in Worcester with those rascals. There 's no use trying to walk there to-day, and I 'm sure I 'm not going to make Molly go out in this storm, so I 'll have to wait. Well, I can think, and perhaps my time won't be wasted."

All that day the storm raged, and William began toward night to become impatient as he saw no signs of clearing. He had been to the barn several times to make sure that the mare was comfortable, and even this short distance of a few rods was as much as his strong physique could endure. He found the barn warm and comfortable, for it was practically covered with snow, and the wind had no inlet. As is sometimes the case in a New England snowstorm, especially when it comes from the northeast with a piercing wind, the weather was intensely cold. It seemed to William that no living being could long survive it, and he settled himself by the kitchen fire and entered into conversation with the farmer and his wife.

"Is this the kind of weather you usually have in this town?" he asked with a laugh.

"Well, not exactly," answered the farmer. "I ain't seen nothing like it for twenty year. But, as the saying is, 'It 's an ill wind that don't blow no good,' and I guess this one will help some of us."

"It helps me to comfortable quarters with you," said Perry, pleasantly, "but I don't suppose that 's what you mean."

"No, it ain't, sir. What I mean is this: them rascals that can't see when they 're well treated, are roaming about the country a stealing and getting drunk, and this 'll put a stop to 'em for a while. At any rate they can't get down here."

"Whom do you mean?" asked Perry, not quite certain whether his interlocutor referred to the militia or the insurgents.

"I mean Dan Shays and Luke Day, and the thieves who are a follering 'em. I 've suffered as much as they have and a blamed sight more, but I 'm willing to do my share toward keeping up this great government. Do ye know they 're a gathering in Worcester to-day, or at least they mean to if the weather 'll let 'em? The court sets there this week."

"Yes, I know," answered Perry, "and I in-

tended walking over to Worcester, to-day. I wanted to see the sheriff about some business."

"Well, you won't get there to-day nor to-morrow, nuther, unless I 'm mighty mistaken. I ain't dared to go there for a week, and I advise ye to keep out of that town until they get out of it. They 've got the whole place right in their fists, and a decent man can't live there. I 'll make ye comfortable as I can here until ye can move on."

"I 'm obliged to you, and I don't see but that I 'll have to accept your hospitality for a day or two."

The storm which had begun on the night of the third of December lasted without interruption for two days and three nights. On the third morning after his arrival at Ward, William Perry looked out of his window and saw the sun shining brightly; the snow-laden pines, the hills and the country around sparkling in its rays. Where the road was, it would have been difficult to tell, but Perry had become impatient, so determined to undertake the ride to Worcester. He bade farewell to his hosts, and saddling and bridling Molly, mounted and ploughed his way through the drifts. When he finally reached Worcester, he found that Shays and most of his followers had moved to Rutland, and that the courts had adjourned pursuant to the recommendations. He

learned these things at the little tavern from his old friend the host, who was pleased to see him, and more pleased to be rid of the rioters, who had been living freely in the town for some time past.

"They 're a bit discouraged, sir," he said, "but the end ain't come yet. Read this in the Hampshire 'Gazette,' which was left here yesterday."

He handed Perry the paper, and the young man read the following, —

An Address to the people of the several towns in the County of Hampshire now at arms —

GENTLEMEN: —

We have thought proper to inform you of some of the principal causes of the late risings of the people, and also of their present movement, viz.:

1st. The present expensive mode of collecting debts, which, by reason of the great scarcity of cash, will of necessity fill our gaols with unhappy debtors, and thereby a reputable body of people rendered incapable of being serviceable either to themselves or the community.

2d. The moneys raised by impost and excise being appropriated to discharge the interest of governmental securities, and not the foreign debt, when these securities are not subject to taxation.

3d. A suspension of the writ of Habeas Corpus, by which those persons who have stepped forth to assert

and maintain the rights of the people, are liable to be taken and conveyed even to the most distant part of the Commonwealth, and thereby subjected to an unjust punishment.

4th. The unlimited power granted to Justices of the Peace and Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs and Constables, by the Riot Act, indemnifying them to the prosecution thereof, when perhaps wholly actuated from a principle of revenge, hatred, and envy.

Furthermore: Be assured, that this body, now at arms, despise the idea of being instigated by British emissaries, which is so strenuously propagated by the enemies of our liberties: and also wish the most proper and speedy measures may be taken to discharge both our foreign and domestic debt.

Per Order.

DANIEL GRAY.

Chairman of the Committee for the above purpose.

Perry laid down the paper and thought. It seemed to him that the case of Deacon Brown was especially referred to in this order. Nothing could be more appropriate. The blacksmith had been arrested and imprisoned from a principle of envy; he had been, perhaps, carried to the most distant part of the Commonwealth. Perry saw clearly that the people were not yet satisfied, and that the host was right in saying that the end of the troubles had not yet come.

"No doubt government is acting as well as it can," he thought, as he went to his room, "but the people have some just cause for complaint, and were it not for unscrupulous leaders, they would settle everything in a very short time."

CHAPTER XXIX.

ON the following morning, Perry set out early in search of the sheriff of Worcester, for he thought that from him he might perhaps get on the track of Deacon Brown. The recent snow-storm had left the streets of the town in an almost impassable condition, and they were nearly deserted. A few of Shays' followers were to be seen, but the greater part of them had gone with their leader to Rutland, where they were to remain for some time in a forlorn and almost destitute condition.

The walk from the inn to the court house was not a long one, and Perry had little difficulty in finding the sheriff. Upon being shown the order for Brown's release, the officer gave Perry every attention, but, unfortunately, little information. He remembered sending one of his constables to Petersham about two weeks before, but he had been so much occupied in Worcester since then, that he had not kept the run of him.

"He 's not here, though," said the sheriff. "I have a full list of all those in our house of correction, and I know he is n't among 'em."

"Where would you advise looking?" asked Perry.

"It 's hard to say, sir. Now I think of it, that 's the constable who 's never turned up. If he did n't take him to Boston you may make up your mind that he 's gone west. I 've had a great deal of trouble with some of my deputies and constables lately. Two have been caught in collusion with the rebels, and another has been accused of receiving a bribe. We can't trust any one in these days."

Perry thanked the man, returned to the inn, and wrote to Ruth. So far as being interrupted by the insurgents was concerned, there was very little danger of it at present. The court in Worcester had adjourned, and that in Springfield was not to meet until the twenty-sixth of December, and the severe weather had dampened the ardor of those most actively engaged in carrying on the rebellion. So it was that early the next day William set out again toward the west. His ultimate destination was Springfield, but he intended going very slowly, for ten miles through the unbroken snowdrifts was a good day's journey for the mare,

and he knew that she might have many miles to travel before he had accomplished his object. The first night he spent in Spencer, the second in Ware, the third in Ludlow; and on the afternoon of the fourth, rode into Springfield, where he put up at the tavern and determined to rest, and if possible learn something.

It was about a week after this, as Ruth was sitting in the parlor, looking out over the river toward Wollaston Heights, that Mr. Minot came in hurriedly and handed her a letter. She knew the writing well, and broke the seal nervously, for she had expected to hear something by every post, and as each letter had brought no news of her father, she had become more and more anxious. As she began to read this one her face lighted, but as she proceeded the anxious look returned, and the tears came to her eyes. Mr. Minot noticed it, and taking her hand kindly, said, —

"I trust the news is not bad, my dear girl?"

"It is good and bad, both," answered Ruth, sorrowfully. "Father 's found, but he 's very, very ill. Read the letter."

Mr. Minot took it and read.

"Dear, dear," he said, as he finished. "This is too bad. William wants you to go to Peter-

sham to meet him. Then he has heard from Ames that the farm is redeemed? Of course. I did n't see that part, I was so much interested in the rest."

"But how am I to get there, Mr. Minot?" asked Ruth, helplessly.

"I 'll attend to that, my dear. I 'd go with you myself, but I can't very well leave. But I can arrange it. You shall have a sleigh, and two reliable men shall go with you."

"How kind everybody is to me," said Ruth, looking up gratefully.

"You deserve all we can do for you, my dear girl. I 'll see about it at once, and you can start this afternoon."

Much had happened since William Perry had left for his search after the blacksmith. Fisher Ames had seen Piper and frightened the little man into making a settlement. He had then tried to get from him the name of the place where Deacon Brown was hidden, and in the end had succeeded, and thus Perry learned by letter before he left Springfield that the old man had been taken to the county gaol in Northampton, where William found him in a pitiable condition. Deacon Brown was a broken man, and so much changed that Perry scarcely knew him. The once

strong form was bent and shattered, his eyes were wild and glassy, and he did not recognize the young man as he spoke to him. Perry's heart was touched, and he at once made arrangements for having Brown driven to Petersham. He mounted Molly, and they moved silently away.

It was now past the middle of December, and the road between Northampton and Petersham was very quiet, for Shays and Day had left Rutland, and were on their way to Springfield, far to the south of the country through which William was taking the blacksmith. But the steep, narrow ways were heavy, and they made but slow progress. More than once Perry spoke to the old man, but received no answer but a wild stare, and then with a sad heart the young man fell back and rode silently for hours. At last he passed through New Salem and Petersham, on toward the farm. Then for the first time a ray of light came into the blacksmith's eyes, and the furrows deepened between his brows, and he passed his hand over his head, down through his beard. He tried to speak, but the words would not come, and shaking his head, he relapsed into his former condition. Deacon Brown was doomed, for he had already had a slight paralytic shock.

As they took him into the house he seemed

again to be struggling with himself, and his lips moved.

When they had built the fire, William left him in the care of the men who had driven the sleigh, and went down to the tavern. He had no difficulty in securing a young woman to assist in taking care of the blacksmith until Ruth should arrive. After everything had been made comfortable, Perry went again to the tavern, dined, mounted Molly, and started off toward Barre.

"If she's got my letter and started at once she'll be here this afternoon," he thought, as he rode away. "We've made slow progress with the poor old chap, and she'll undoubtedly hurry. Mr. Minot or Ames will see that she gets here safely."

As he passed by the entrance of the lane where he had been captured by Day, he stopped and looked about.

"Quite a change since I was here last. I wonder what became of those three ruffians? One was all right, I know, and I really hope the others were too. If I had time I'd run in a minute, but I might just lose her."

He hesitated a moment, then spoke to the mare, and started off again toward Barre.

It was late in the afternoon of the second day after receiving Perry's letter, that Ruth Brown lay

in the back of a sleigh drawn by two horses, which was being driven rapidly along the road from Princeton to Barre. She had met very few travellers, and her thoughts were on her father and William all the time. Mr. Minot had told her that as nearly as he could calculate, William should reach Petersham in two days, and the two men he had got to conduct her were urging their tired beasts to their utmost. They were about to ascend the steep winding road leading from the valley to Barre, when Ruth noticed a horseman coming down the hill toward her. Her heart bounded, for she had recognized William. In another moment he drew up beside her and dismounted.

"Oh! I 'm so glad you 've come to meet me," she said, as he took her hand. "How 's father? Is he at the farm?"

"Yes, Ruth," answered William, with a sad smile, "but I 'll not deceive you. He 's very ill."

"I was afraid so," said Ruth, with a sigh. "Is he comfortable? Who 's with him now?"

"The two men who drove us from Northampton, and a young woman named Barnes. They got her for me at the tavern."

"Sarah Barnes? I 'm glad she 's there. She 's Sam's sister, and will take good care of father. When did you get there?"

"Three or four hours ago. I 'll mount now and ride beside you. Who got you this fine sleigh?" he went on with a smile.

"Mr. Minot, and these two men have been so kind to me. They have been with Mr. Minot a great many years, and he let them come with me."

"I thank you both very much," said Perry, warmly.

The men nodded and smiled without answering.

About two hours later the sleigh drew up before the shed door, and Ruth got out and rushed into the house. She was met in the kitchen by Sarah Barnes, who motioned to her to be quiet.

"How is he?" asked Ruth, under her breath.

"Very bad, Ruth. He 's come to a little, and seems to know where he is, and thinks these men are the officers after him. He 's spoken twice and called you, but you must n't go in on him too sudden. Wait until he calls again, and then answer him as if you had been here all the time. Take off your things and roll up your sleeves. He won't know you like this."

Ruth did as she was bid, and, sitting by the fire with a fast beating heart, waited. It was some time before she heard any movement in the little room off the kitchen, but at last there was a muf-

fled sound, as of some one breathing heavily. She crept close to the door and listened.

"Ruth," said a low voice, "Ruth, them 's the officers. I 've been calling ye. Where are ye, girl?"

"Here I am, father," said Ruth, cheerfully, running into the room. She stopped short, and her head swam, and she put her hand to her eyes. She had not realized what was in store for her, and the shock was too much for her to bear. She tried to regain her composure, but it was no use, she had been through too much. With a sob she went to her father's bedside and fell on her knees beside him.

"Oh! father, father," she cried. "How cruel they 've been to you!"

The blacksmith's hand crept unsteadily toward the girl's hair, and his glassy eyes turned slowly toward her.

"Ruth," he said.

"Yes, father," said Ruth, trying again to smile through her tears.

"Is the farm our'n?"

"Yes, father."

"And have them rascals been caught?"

"I think so, father."

"And you 'll have the farm if I die?"

"Yes, father."

"Then I don't care. I ain't no use to ye any more, Ruth dear. I 've had a shock, and I 'll have another."

"Oh! father, don't speak so. You 've been so good to me, and the other people have been good to me since you 've been away."

"Who, Ruth?" said the blacksmith, his brows contracting.

"Some one whom you have n't trusted, father, but who 's done everything for us and got you home and got us back the farm."

Deacon Brown looked at his daughter with a puzzled expression. Then his eyes wandered round the room, and he said slowly, —

"I guess — I guess I ain't been jest right, Ruth. Did some one bring me home? I 've been a riding in a sleigh with them officers, ain't I, Ruth?"

"No, father. You 're out of prison, and those were friends who were bringing you home."

"Oh!"

Deacon Brown's brows contracted again, and he shook his head.

"I dunno," he said doubtingly. "Guess I must a missed something. Ain't I been here all the time? Ain't this — No, it ain't — it 's — it 's the farm. I 'm kind of weak, Ruth dear, and I can't

move much, but my head's getting clearer. I see. Yes, I see. I've been in prison and got back. Well, well," and he began to smile.

Ruth saw that she had brought her father's mind back by her presence, but she knew that it could not last long, for his eyes were beginning to wander again, and the wild look was coming back. So she spoke quickly, —

"Shall I tell you who has saved us, father?" she asked.

"Ye — yes. Saved us, yes."

"Mr. Perry, father, the lawyer you did n't trust, and whom you would n't listen to. He 's here now."

"Yes," said the blacksmith, slowly, "saved us. Perry, five hundred dollars and interest. Blow the bellows, Jimmy. Ah!"

Ruth jumped to her feet and looked at her father. His eyes were rolling about in their sockets, his mouth was twitching, and his hands moving convulsively. She rushed to the door and called, —

"William! Sarah! Has the doctor come? I 'm afraid father's dying."

"He 's coming into the house now, Ruth," said Perry, going quickly into Brown's room.

When the doctor reached the room the black-

smith was lying quietly with his hand hanging over the side of the bed.

"He 's had another slight shock," said the doctor. "He 'll come out of this, and may live for weeks, but he 'll never speak again."

The day after this, William Perry sat on Molly, outside the shed door. Ruth was by his side, looking up at him with tears in her eyes.

"Good-bye, dear," she said with a forced smile. "God bless you. I 'll stay with father until he dies. Then you 'll come to me?"

"Yes, Ruth, and I 'll try to make you happy, though I can never be as good to you as your father has been. He has given up life and everything for love of you. I only wish he could have known me and liked me. But that can't be now. I shall be back before long. Good-bye."

William Perry returned to Boston, leaving Ruth to take care of her father. He knew very well that it would not be long before he would return to Petersham.

CHAPTER XXX.

NEW Year's Day had arrived. Since the alarming news from Worcester and Springfield had reached Boston, the town had been in a state of great excitement, and many citizens were fearful lest there should be an unexpected attack upon the town, and every point of approach had been well guarded. The governor and Council had decided to send a strong force against the insurgents, and that General Lincoln should lead it.

Notwithstanding this condition of affairs, Governor Bowdoin had issued his invitations to the customary New Year's reception, for there could be no better mode of getting at the true feelings of the leading people of the town. During the end of the last century social gatherings were places for discussions, and many important decisions were arrived at on these occasions, which were later carried to public meetings and the halls of legislation.

Among those who had been honored with an invitation was William Perry, who was now visiting his old friends in Dorchester. He would have preferred to refuse, for his mind was on other things. It was seventy miles away in the simple little farmhouse in Petersham, which at that moment would have seemed a paradise in comparison with the glittering formalities and brilliant surroundings of the governor's mansion. Under the circumstances, however, he had nothing to do but accept, for he could neither offend the governor nor his host. He therefore dressed himself in his suit of purple velvet with lace ruffles and embroidered waistcoat, threw a fur cape over his shoulders, and putting his cocked hat upon his head, followed Mr. Minot into the sleigh and was driven to Boston.

"You 're very silent to-day, William," said Mr. Minot, as they were spinning along over the Neck. "What 's on your mind, my boy?"

"To tell you the truth, sir, I cannot feel that it is right to have this display to-day. I do not feel comfortable in these clothes. I know that it will seem foolish to you, but when I think of all those who are suffering, and there are many of them, it makes me wonder whether we are doing right."

"I think you are a little over-sensitive, William,"

answered Mr. Minot, kindly. "This is an unusual occasion: it 's New Year's Day, and all classes of people have to be considered. There would be much complaint were his excellency to neglect his social duties. The ladies have certainly done their share, and sacrificed much by giving up their luxuries and expensive costumes. This will be a little break for many of them, and I 'm sure they deserve it."

"Undoubtedly you 're right, sir, but you know where my thoughts are, and you 'll not blame me. When the picture of that dear girl watching and waiting by her father's bedside comes before me, it makes me silent. You 'll forgive me?"

"I 'd think very little of you if you felt otherwise, William. But try to enjoy yourself to-day. You 've had nothing but work and worry lately, and a little relaxation will do you good."

As they drove up Beacon Hill toward the governor's mansion, they noticed the long line of sleighs passing in front of the gate. There were also many pedestrians bound in the same direction, clad in rich fur capes, below which appeared their velvet small-clothes, black stockings, and polished, buckled shoes. One of these Perry knew, for he had more than once appeared before him. He wore a bright red cape lined with fur, and carried

a large muff. He reached the gate just as Mr. Minot and William were getting out of the sleigh, and recognizing one another they all bowed.

"Good-day, sir, good-day," said Judge Dana, for it was he. "Ah, you've brought my young friend Perry. You've had very little chance of appearing in court lately, but matters are improving. What a beautiful day this is!"

Perry made an appropriate answer, and together they ascended the steps. The door was opened by a negro, while another took their wraps, and they then appeared before the host.

There has long been a mistaken idea both at home and abroad that the end of the nineteenth century is beginning to teach New Englanders the niceties and manners of good society. A hundred years ago it would have been difficult to find more social refinement and *savoir vivre* than among the high fashion of Boston. Nowhere was obedience to every social law more requisite than in the little Puritanic capital. So far as manners go, we have gone down hill rather than up.

Governor Bowdoin stood at the end of the large reception-room, whose polished floor shone like a mirror, and with stately grace and great dignity greeted those who passed before him, in a manner which would surprise many to-day, who have come

to look upon the Chief Magistrate of the Commonwealth simply as a servant of the people, and not as its social head. The room was filled with the aristocracy of Boston, and all the distinguished citizens were either there or in the dining-room, where the heavy-laden table, rich with flowers and glass and silver, groaned under its burden of good things. On one end was the governor's punch-bowl of solid silver, with the glasses hanging about it. The whole house was a mass of plants and flowers, and in every fireplace large oak logs were crackling. Perry looked about him and recognized many of the guests. There was General Lincoln, as always, dressed in sombre black, conversing with John Hancock in rich blue velvet, gold, and lace. Near them in a little group were Samuel Eliot, John Lowell, Harrison Gray Otis, and Thomas Russell. Mr. Minot was talking with his cousin, George R. Minot. What lent a special charm to the scene was the presence of so large a number of the ladies of the period, decked in their most gorgeous attire for this occasion; for as Mr. Minot had suggested to Perry on their drive over the Neck, the wives and daughters of the Boston merchants had, out of respect for the sufferings and needy condition of the poorer women throughout the Commonwealth, formed clubs whose mem-

bers pledged themselves to wear nothing but homespun until the time should come when the distress should be lightened, and the strained relations between the farmers and government be relaxed. It is unfortunate that the kind motives of these worthy Boston women were not better appreciated; but as is almost invariably the case under like conditions, their sacrifices were looked upon either with suspicion, or with a feeling that they were doing no more than they were in honor bound to do under the circumstances.

French visitors to Boston at the end of the last century were almost unanimous in their praise of the ladies of the New England capital, and at that period there were no better judges of the manners, toilette, and bearing of the high-bred woman than our friends and recent allies across the water. And they made no mistake. By training and birth there were no more refined, cultivated, and pure-minded ladies in the drawing-rooms of the highest fashion of either continent than those who were gathered in Governor Bowdoin's house on Beacon Hill in Boston, on January the first, 1787.

As the reader has already become aware, William Perry was a young man of affairs, and had been little among the *élite* of the town. There were naturally many whom he did not know, but

there were three of those who were surrounded by admiring groups, whom he had seen often, and who at this time held a most prominent position in Boston society.

The first of these who attracted Perry's attention was standing by a window, conversing earnestly with an elderly gentleman in black velvet. Her powdered hair made her brilliant dark eyes seem unusually bright. Her pompadour waist and dark green skirt with puffings of satin and point lace, set off her graceful figure, and it was some moments before Perry could remove his eyes from her, so much was he impressed with her noble expression, full of intellect and courage. This was Mercy Warren, the sister of the great patriot and statesman who had been sacrificed before he had accomplished his full work.

At last the young man's eyes wandered from Mrs. Warren to another group, in the centre of which stood Madam Haley, who had married her steward, and finally getting enough of him, returned to England. Madam Haley was one of those self-constituted leaders of society who occasionally come to the surface, and for some reason, possibly because of certain merits which it is difficult to define, are successful in accomplishing

their ends. They existed in Rome two thousand years ago; they exist in every great centre to-day; and they will continue to appear somewhere as long as the world lasts.

Madam Haley was a striking woman, and a very eccentric one, but she held her sway, and was undoubtedly a leader of Boston society. Perry was still looking at her, when a young man approached him, and greeted him pleasantly.

"Good-day, Otis," answered William. "You 've caught me staring at the ladies, which I know is not good manners; but Madam Haley always attracts me, notwithstanding she is not handsome, and is apt to show her Wilkes tooth."

"I don't blame you, Perry," said Otis, with a smile. "But you should have seen her last June. She was then in all her glory."

"What was the occasion?"

"The opening of the Charlestown bridge. Were you not there?"

"No. I was away on business, so lost the ceremony."

"Well, Madam Haley led the procession over the bridge in a phaeton drawn by four white horses, and I really believe it was the happiest day in her life. I think she had some difficulty in getting permission, but she carried her point, as she always

does, although it cost her five hundred dollars to do so. She 's unmistakably a wonderful woman. If she 'd only take charge of the militia she'd capture Shays in less than a week. Have you seen Mrs. Hancock? Turn your eyes toward her; she 's of a different type."

Perry followed Otis' gaze, and caught sight of the third of the ladies he knew.

"Who are those three ladies talking with Mr. Sullivan?" asked Perry, a moment later.

"The one in the black velvet and diamonds is Mrs. Edmund Perkins; the one next her is Mrs. John Murray, and the other with the gray silk and lace cap you should know. I have met her often in Philadelphia. I 'll present you to her in a few moments."

"I thank you very much. Who is she?"

"Dr. Franklin's only daughter, Mrs. Richard Bache. She is visiting Mrs. Warren, who has brought her here to-day. She is one of the heroines of the war, and you should know her."

Sarah Bache was then in her forty-third year, and was indeed a lovely woman. Simple, unaffected, she had inherited a good share of her father's brains and patriotism. Perry found her conversation most charming, and when she learned that the young man had seen the sufferings of

the New England country-folk, she was much interested, and asked many questions.

"They are doing wrong, very wrong," she said, with a compassionate smile. "Yet they should be treated with great kindness, for it is to the farmers that we owe the first stroke for our liberties."

"Unfortunately it is not the farmers we have to deal with, or rather it is unfortunate that we have to deal with their leaders," said Mrs. Murray.

"I think you are right," said Mrs. Bache. "We in Philadelphia are waiting for you good New England folk to lead us to federation."

"You are very flattering," said Otis, bowing, "and I think, madam, that you will not be disappointed. His excellency and General Lincoln are capable of almost anything."

So the conversation went on, until at last Perry bowed and left them.

"Have you seen Ames?" he said to Otis a little later.

"No; I don't think he's here, at least not in this room. He may be in the dining-room. I 've not been there yet."

"If you 'll excuse me I think I 'll look him up."

As he went through the room Perry saw many of his acquaintances, whom he saluted pleasantly.

He then crossed the hall to the dining-room, where he had caught sight of his friend, Fisher Ames.

"I 'm glad to see you," said Ames, taking his hand, "and I 've got something to tell you which will interest and please you. Come over by that orange-tree. We 'll be alone there."

Perry followed, and then Ames went on: "Our friend Jeremiah has disappeared."

"What do you mean?" said William, in astonishment.

"Just what I say, Perry. Listen. No, let 's have a glass of that punch first. I 've only just arrived, and I 'm chilled."

After drinking, they returned to the corner, and Ames proceeded, —

"It 's quite an entertaining narrative. As you perhaps know, there has been in circulation quite an amount of counterfeit coin, British, Spanish, and French, and government has been trying to find the culprits."

"And they suspected Piper?" said Perry, quickly.

"Yes, they suspected him, and determined to examine his premises. They did so, but found nothing there. Not an article remained, and the bird had flown."

"How did he get wind of it?"

"That is not known, but I have my own theory. No one had any notice of the proposed visit to his house except the officers, and it must have been from one of them that he learned it. Who was it? You should know, Perry."

William thought a minute, and then started.

"How dull I am to be sure! the man who assisted him in foreclosing the mortgage."

"Exactly, Perry. You've guessed right. There was a peculiar thing found in the room above the shop."

"What was that?"

"Near the fireplace a plank had been removed from the floor, and a gold coin lay on one of the timbers."

"A counterfeit?"

"No, that's the strange thing about it. It was a good one."

The young men laughed.

"This is really quite amusing," said Perry. "So long as we're rid of him, I shall feel more comfortable. Where do they think he's gone?"

"The Lord only knows, and I don't think any one cares much."

"What's become of the energetic Samuel?"

"Gone with his master. This is rather an en-

tertaining ending to his career. But tell me, how's Miss Ruth? How's her father?"

"Thank you, Ames, she's well. The old man is much the same. He can't last long."

"Do you know that they've formed a company of light infantry here, and I'm going with 'em? I didn't enjoy the last trip, but if Lincoln goes, we'll have a rapid and decisive campaign."

"Who's in the company?"

"Otis is captain, and Russell and Gray lieutenants. Why won't you come too?"

"I can't, Ames; I must wait here. Besides, you know that I am neutral in this war."

"Of course, I'd forgotten. Well, I must say farewell to his excellency, and then be off."

The two young men crossed the hall, but when they reached the reception-room were surprised to find the governor the centre of an interested group of listeners. In his hand he held a letter which had just been brought to him in great haste.

"What is it, Otis?" said Ames.

"His excellency has news that Shays, Day, and Eli Parsons are in Springfield, and have possession of the court house. There is anxiety lest they get hold of the arsenal."

"This is serious. What steps does he intend taking?"

"He has called a meeting of the Council for this afternoon, and will recommend a mobilization of the militia all over the State. He 's told Lincoln that he 'll have to take command. See how fierce the old fire-eater looks. But he 's the right man. He ought to have been sent before."

"Who 's going to pay for all this?" asked Ames, with a smile. "The exchequer is empty."

"The gentlemen here have already signified their willingness to assist government."

"Very patriotic," said Ames.

"William," said Mr. Minot, a few minutes later, "with your permission we 'll be going. I think his excellency is anxious to be rid of us, that he may attend the meeting of the Council."

Mr. Minot and Perry discussed the situation on their drive home, and William spoke of Piper's disappearance.

"A very fortunate thing that you 'd arranged everything about the farm. It might have caused a good deal of annoyance."

"Yes, I 'm very grateful to Ames for his good management of that affair. I 'm inclined to think, Mr. Minot, that I ought to go up to Petersham. I don't like to leave them alone."

"You must do as you think best, William, but

you 're welcome to stay with me as long as you see fit."

"I know I am, and you are very kind, but I think I 'll start to-morrow morning."

Accordingly, early on the following day, Perry set out once more toward the farm.

CHAPTER XXXI.

IT was the twenty-third of January, and the troops under General Lincoln had left Roxbury, and been four days on their march toward Springfield, in haste to reach there in time to relieve General Shepard, who was in a perilous position, hemmed in as he was by the different insurgent bands. Shays was on the Boston road with a force of eleven hundred; Parsons was to the north of the town with four hundred from Berkshire; and Luke Day was across the river in West Springfield with another four hundred, awaiting the word from Shays to join in the attack on the town. With Captain Day were two young men whom we know, Jimmy Brown and Abe Morse. The poor boys had been through many hardships during the last few weeks, and their ardor was somewhat dampened, but they could not now get away from their service. In fact, to attempt it would have meant starvation to them. The march from Worcester to Rutland five or six weeks be-

fore had caused great distress among the rebel troops, and some had dropped by the roadside and been frozen to death. Jimmy Brown had had his feet badly frost-bitten, but he had gotten over it, and managed to keep up with the broken ranks. This little band with Day in West Springfield was poorly housed. The weather was very cold, and food was scarce, although the farmers and their wives, in their sympathy with the men, supplied them with every comfort they had at hand. Abe and Jimmy were resting side by side on a pile of hay in an old barn, where they were quite comfortable, considering their surroundings.

"I 'm kind of sick of this, Abe," said young Brown, rolling over and facing his friend. "What are we getting out of it, anyway? We 're almost starved, and so fur ain't gained anything. I begin to think the whole thing 's wrong, and I 'd like to go home to the forge."

"And me too, Jimmy. They 've been a promising and a promising us that we 'd lick them militia and get our rights, but here we are, wandering round over the hills and through the snow, without a roof to cover us most of the time, and mighty little to eat. I ain't got the strength to walk home, or I 'd leave."

"They shot a fellow as tried to get away the

other day, Abe. I guess that lawyer was right. They 're making fools of us. What are they a waiting here for?"

"For Dan Shays to send word that it 's time to cross the river and take the arsenal, Jimmy. But they won't do it no more 'n they 've done all the other things they 've promised. What do ye say if we go out of here and cross over and try to go toward Petersham? It 's dark, and I guess we can get by 'em."

"I 'll do it, Abe," said Jimmy, jumping to his feet; "we might as well get killed that way as any other. The river 's safe, ain't it?"

"Yes, more 'n two feet thick. Come, we 'll crawl out through the barn-yard, and nobody 'll see us."

The two youths rose noiselessly and crept toward the cow-shed, whence a small door led into the yard behind the barn. They passed through this without detection, and before long were crossing the river rapidly. When they reached Springfield they were in doubt which way to go, but keeping down the river bank, skirted the southern edge of the town, and were soon to the east of it. Unfortunately for the young men they were not aware that Shays and his army were stationed on that side of Springfield. They were attempting to cross the Boston road, intending to

strike through the woods toward Granby, when a dark figure emerged from behind a tree, and presenting a musket said in a low tone, —

"Who goes there?"

Jimmy and Abe stood still and looked at each other. Then the latter took courage and said, —

"We 're on our way home, sir."

"Who are you?"

"We work in Granby, sir."

"No one is allowed to pass to-night. I shall be obliged to take you to the captain."

He gave a low whistle, and three more armed men appeared from the darkness.

"Take these chaps to Cap'n Shays," said the sentinel. "I guess he 'd like to see 'em."

Without more ado the two youths were led into an adjoining field, and up to an old barn.

"Who goes there?" said a man at the door.

"A friend with friends," answered one of the men who were conducting Abe and Jimmy.

"For the colonel?"

"No, for the cap'n."

"Then enter."

The door was opened, and they found themselves in the barn, one corner of which was lighted by two tallow candles. Captain Shays and four other men, evidently of his staff, were seated round a

wooden box, on which was spread a large sheet of paper. On hearing the door open, Shays raised his head and glanced toward the new-comers.

"Who 's there?" he said sharply.

"A friend with friends, cap'n."

"And who are the friends?"

"Found 'em on the road, cap'n."

"Bring 'em in."

Shays examined the young men carefully and suspiciously.

"Who are you?" he asked at last.

"We 're on our way home, sir," answered Abe, who was the spokesman.

"That ain't answering my question," said the captain, severely. "What 's your name? Where do ye come from?"

"My name 's Morse, and his name 's Brown," answered Abe, in despair. "We belong in Petersham, and would like to go home."

"You would, would ye?" said Shays, with a laugh. "Well, my friends, I guess you 'll have to stay with us until we 've taken Springfield. That 'll be to-morrow, so you won't have long to wait. Take 'em away now, I 'm busy."

"We 'd better of stayed where we was," said Jimmy, mournfully, as they lay in the field a little later.

On the following morning, Luke Day made a tour of inspection, and found that a number of his followers had deserted during the night. Those who remained were in a disheartened, surly mood, and he was uncertain what to do. It was some hours after this that a man rode hurriedly up to the house where Day had his headquarters, and handed him a message.

"From Cap'n Shays," said the man. "He wants an answer right off."

Day took the paper and read it.

"Tell Cap'n Shays with my compliments that I can't go to-morrow. I 'll be there the day after."

When, on the following morning, the twenty-fifth of January, Shays had received no answer from Day in West Springfield, he presumed that the message had been delivered and would be obeyed; so he marshalled his forces and marched in open column toward "The Hill," on the eastern side of the town, where were situated the arsenal and military stores. Jimmy and Abe were in the ranks.

The sun was getting low when Shays' troops began climbing the hill, and he perceived General Shepard awaiting him with the field-pieces in a commanding position. But Daniel Shays had become desperate, and he knew very well that in the

success of this day's undertaking lay his only chance of redeeming himself and of keeping together his already wavering ranks; so he marched ahead until within less than three hundred yards of the militia, where for a second time he received a message from Shepard, warning him that he would be fired upon if he proceeded further.

"Tell 'em that 's jest what we want 'em to do," answered Shays, undaunted. He immediately gave orders to advance.

General Shepard had by this time become impatient, and upon his command two volleys were fired over the insurgents' heads, in hopes of stopping them. But they were desperate, and, headed by a band of veterans from the Continental army, still kept on.

"In the name of the governor and Council of the Commonwealth, I order you to halt and lay down your arms," roared General Shepard.

A low murmur and a hoarse laugh from Shays was the only answer as they came within a few yards of the artillery. Then it was that the militia levelled their muskets and there was a loud report, followed by screams and cries of murder. The shock had been too great, and Captain Shays' army wavered, turned, and fled down the hill, and on ten miles to Ludlow.

Jimmy Brown and Abe Morse were not the last to arrive at that place, for a renewal of strength had come suddenly to them, and their legs moved easily and quickly, the more so because they had heard Captain Shays' voice calling after them, and threatening them with death if they deserted.

As the fugitives passed up the road through Chicopee between the forest trees, the last rays of the setting sun were fading away on the summit of Mount Tom across the river. Here Shays was reinforced by Parsons with his Berkshire band, and together they waited, intending to make another attempt on the following day, although many hundreds of their followers had deserted. But news came before daylight that General Lincoln was nearing the town; so abandoning their plan of action, they marched in disorder to South Hadley and Amherst, suffering much discomfort. Thence they went to Pelham.

Jimmy and Abe now saw the wisdom of remaining with the main body of the insurgents, for they were headed in the direction of Petersham. The young men felt that the war was over, and they were glad of it, for they had become convinced, as had many others, that Dan Shays was a tyrant, working only for his own selfish ends.

CHAPTER XXXII.

WILLIAM PERRY and Ruth Brown sat in the kitchen of the farmhouse in Petersham, but they were not alone, for the good pastor of the parish, Rev. Solomon Reed, had come in to see Ruth and comfort her, as had been his daily custom since Deacon Brown died two weeks before. Ruth was weeping, and William was sitting by the open fire, gazing into it in a distracted manner.

"Keep a brave heart, Ruth my dear," said the minister, looking at her kindly. "God has taken a good father from you, but has given you some one to fill his place."

"I know it, I know it, sir," answered Ruth, tenderly. "It was better that father should go, but it 's hard to lose him and think of all he suffered. And Jimmy — what has become of Jimmy?"

"I 've just heard, Ruth, that Shays is in Pelham. If that is true, your brother will be here before long. It 's too bad that he should have gone on this expedition, but your father always did what he thought right, so we must n't blame him."

"I don't blame him, Mr. Reed. I blame that wicked Captain Shays who has caused all our troubles. Do you think they'll catch him? I hope Jimmy will get home before they do."

"And in time for the wedding, too?" said Mr. Reed, with a cheerful smile.

Perry caught the last words, and turned quickly.

"If you wish it, Ruth dear," he said, "I'll jump on Molly and go to Pelham after Jimmy. There'll be no danger in so doing, for they're too much occupied to care about so unimportant a personage as I am."

"Do you really think it will be safe?" asked Ruth, looking first at William, then at Mr. Reed.

"I can't see very much danger in it now," answered the minister, after a moment's thought. "As Mr. Perry says, he can easily escape their notice, and they have about as much as they can attend to."

"Very well, then," answered Ruth, brightening up a little. "I know what a silly, foolish boy Jimmy is, but he's my brother, and we've always been very fond of each other. If you can get there without any risk, I shall be very happy."

It was the third of February, and for the past few days the weather had been bright and mild; but the roads were unbroken. Across the lane where

it turned toward the smithy lay a great drift, through which it had been necessary to dig a path. William Perry went past the blacksmith's shop, and then through a narrow way by the southern outskirts of the town. He had inquired of the minister how to make a short cut to Pelham, and had learned that by keeping in a southwesterly direction he would pass through a little outlying parish of Hardwick, thence to Pelham. By doing this he would escape the highway, although the journey would be a difficult one.

It was late in the afternoon when he reached Pelham, and discovered that Shays and his band had started suddenly for Petersham. He was in a way relieved, for he felt that if Jimmy was with them he would go directly to the farm, and that Ruth would know that he had missed her brother on the road. It was impossible for him to return that night, so he secured such quarters as he could get, and decided to rest until the next morning.

He was very tired after his hard ride, and was soon sleeping heavily. Undoubtedly he would have continued to do so, had it not been for an unexpected stir in the little village, some time in the middle of the night, which caused him to jump from his bed and rush to the window overlooking the road. There was the sound of horses galloping

over the snow, and of men shouting, and William was perplexed, for he had been given to understand that Shays was in Petersham, and that General Lincoln was resting quietly in Hadley, awaiting the answer of the insurgents to his order to lay down their arms. He therefore dressed quickly and ran down-stairs, and out into the street.

As he did so, a man rode up to him and said:

"How long have they been away from here?"

"How long has who been away from here?" repeated Perry, in the form of a question.

"Shays, of course. You don't seem to know much about him. Too little, I guess. General Lincoln and the artillery are only about two miles behind, and there 's no use in putting us off. Answer me, how long is it since Shays left Pelham?"

"I really can't tell you," answered Perry, coolly. "I only arrived here late yesterday, or perhaps this, afternoon, and he was gone then; but further than that I know nothing."

"Well, who are you anyway?" asked the man, in some surprise.

Perry laughed.

"I 'm not a follower of Daniel Shays, you may be sure. No, I came here in search of some one who is with him, and I 'm as disappointed as you

can be at not finding him. But I can assure you of one thing, — he left here before four o'clock yesterday afternoon, and has gone to Petersham."

"Ah!" said the man, and rode away.

A company of about fifty horsemen had now collected in the town, and as the man who had spoken to Perry rode up to their leader, the latter at once gave the order to advance, and without further delay they started toward Petersham by the same road over which he had come a few hours before. They left two of their number behind them, evidently to give the word to the main body of the army, which could not now be far away.

"This is my chance," thought Perry, as he ran toward the barn. "I 'll put the saddle on Molly and go along with them. If they should happen to surprise the rebels, it might go hard with Jimmy unless I was there to look out for him."

A little later he rode out of the barn, seated on the mare. As he did so he saw the advanced guard of the main body coming over the hill. Then came the artillery, following which was the infantry, the sleighs bringing up the rear.

"There must be some one here whom I know besides General Lincoln," thought Perry, as he rode out into the dark road and mingled with the others.

"I 'll speak to one of these chaps, and find out something. — Good evening, sir," he said, going up to a man who was evidently an officer. "Is Captain Otis' light infantry company here?"

The man looked at him a moment, and began to laugh. "I should n't wonder, Perry. Where under the sun did you come from?"

Perry rode up closer to the man and looked at him.

"I 'm blest if it is n't Tom Russell himself," said William, in delight, putting out his hand. "But how does the infantry happen to be mounted?"

"You see, Perry," said Russell smiling, "our company did n't all come, and we made up a little band of our own. Otis is here, and so is Gray, but Ames had business at Worcester, and as it 's the first chance he 's had there for some time we let him off. We 've had a great jaunt from Hadley, and hoped to catch that rascal here."

"I should say that he started for Petersham about twelve hours ago. If he does n't know that you 're after him he 'll probably spend the night there. I came here yesterday afternoon purely by accident."

"Are you going on with us?" asked Russell.

"Most assuredly. Where 's the general?"

"The officers requested him to get into a sleigh,

and although he does n't consider that the proper place for a commander, he finally consented. Here they come, and we must be moving along."

"It 's lucky you have such a mild night," said Perry, looking up at the sky, "but I don't like the looks of those clouds. I was caught in a snowstorm south of Worcester about two months ago, and I know what it 's like. The roads are bad enough as it is, and after you reach the edge of New Salem you 'll have a pretty steady climb to Petersham."

"Well, we 'll have to stand it. The orders are to go until we catch 'em, and the longer we keep at it, the sooner we 'll accomplish it."

"Tell me what has happened lately," said Perry, after they had started. "I 've heard nothing of your movements since you drove Shays out of Springfield."

"Have n't you really? Well, we 've been through a good deal since then. Let me see, that was about a week ago. When we heard that Shays and Parsons had joined forces at Chicopee, we made up our minds that there might be further trouble, so Lincoln sent word to the governor to have Brooks move west as quickly as possible. He must be on his way now; but we did n't wait for him, for instead of coming back to Springfield,

the rebels started north, evidently with the intention of escaping to some place where they could join their forces and make a united stand against us. We had made a forced march from Boston, and the weather was cold, and the travelling bad; but we had no sooner reached Springfield than we were ordered to proceed toward Ludlow after Shays, while Shepard went up the river on the ice after Day. What he did, I don't know, but we followed Shays through South Hadley and Amherst, and we found that the rascals had been robbing, burning, and doing all the deviltry they could devise. This made Lincoln more angry than ever, and you can imagine what that was. He swore that he 'd hang and shoot every man if he caught 'em, and I believe he 'd have done it, too. Every living man in Amherst had gone off with the scamps, and the town was almost deserted. Whew, the wind 's beginning to blow, is n't it? "

" It 's growing rapidly colder," answered Perry. " Go on with your story, though. I 'm very much interested in it."

" Where was I? Oh, yes. When we left Amherst we were not sure which way to go, but Lincoln finally decided to march to Hadley, as he knew that the troops would be likely to get food and shelter there. Accordingly we went there and

spent the night. The next morning we heard that Shepard had had trouble near Southampton, and Lincoln sent about a hundred of the men in that direction, and then sent a letter to Shays in Pelham telling him that if the rebels would lay down their arms, they would be recommended for mercy. This was last Tuesday. The general received a very impudent answer to this, which was evidently intended to mislead him, and on Wednesday Lincoln wrote again, warning Shays that he must immediately disband, or take the consequences. At six o'clock last night we left Hadley, and have marched on here without stopping."

"What made you start so suddenly?"

"Because Lincoln heard that Shays had moved east with his forces, and he knew that the rascal was up to some kind of mischief. I do believe it's beginning to snow."

There was no mistaking it. The sky was now entirely obscured, and the wind was blowing fitfully from the north, driving the small flakes into the faces of the travellers. They had now reached a stretch through the forest, and could hear the wind rush through the tree-tops with a loud whistling sound, followed by a low moan as it died away, to be succeeded by another and more violent

gust. The trees creaked and snapped, and the men wrapped their cloaks more closely about them. At last they emerged from the woods into an open valley, and like a scourge the tempest beat against them, and they were almost brought to a standstill by its weight. It was now about two o'clock in the morning, and they had reached a point on the edge of New Salem where the valley of Swift River formed a level plain, beyond which rose the hills toward Petersham, eight miles away. The fury of the storm was now terrible, and the snow and sleet was falling fast and thick, piling and blocking up the narrow ways so that it was well-nigh impossible for the men to walk, and the horses to keep their footing. Still on they went, without a word being spoken, and began climbing the steep, winding road.

We who have driven to-day from North Dana to Petersham in a driving snowstorm have had a hard enough journey, although the roads are as the boulevards of a great metropolis in comparison with those of a hundred and ten years ago. Not a house was to be seen then for a stretch of more than eight miles up the almost unbroken ascent through the forest and over fords. This eight miles took General Lincoln's troops nearly seven hours, while the preceding twenty-two miles had

taken them but six. And it is a wonder that they ever arrived, for at times they sank in drifts that nearly buried them, and many were badly frost-bitten. Yet at nine o'clock Sunday morning, February fourth, 1787, the advanced guard, led by Colonel Haskell entered the town, and less than half an hour later William Perry and Thomas Russell rode side by side up to the entrance of the road into the village. William was a weary man, and Molly was breathing heavily. Yet they were both unscarred, and happy to be so near their journey's end.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IT was about nine o'clock on the morning of February fourth, that a little party sat in the kitchen of a farm-house near the Athol road in Petersham, eating a quiet breakfast, talking and laughing, and discussing the skill with which they had eluded their pursuers, — General Lincoln and the militia. The party consisted of Daniel Shays, Eli Parsons, Francis Stone, Adam Wheeler, and about half a dozen others, among whom were Jimmy Brown and Abe Morse, the last two unwilling participants, as they had told the captain that they wished to go home. But Captain Shays had already lost too many men, and held those remaining to him with an iron grasp.

"Ain't we fooled 'em nice?" said Shays, with a laugh, raising the pewter mug and drinking. "Who 'd 'a' thought that they 'd 'a' been taken in so easy? But then, old Lincoln never was very sharp, and I knew he 'd believe me," and he laughed again.

"I guess my petition fixed 'em," said Stone, smiling. "We worded it pretty well, did n't we?"

"You did indeed, Stone. The people here seem to be loyal, don't they? There were one or two who were kind of queer, but they don't amount to enough to make any difference. This is a fine town of yours, Morse. I guess we 'll stay here over the Sabbath, it 's such a good place to rest in."

"When do you suppose the old man 'll hear of our leaving Pelham?" inquired Wheeler, between mouthfuls.

"Not for some time, Adam," answered Shays, with a satisfied smile. "Say, where 're you going to, young man?"

The last remark was addressed to Jimmy Brown, who had risen, and was stealing toward the door.

"I 'm jest going to look out at the storm, cap'n," answered the youth, stopping.

"I guess it ain't safe for ye to go out alone. Jest wait. Now what was I saying? Oh, yes, old Lincoln is a fool, and no mistake."

"If it had n't been for this storm," said Wheeler, "he might have thought it worth while to come on here in a day or two, but I kind of guess he 'll stay in comfortable quarters in Hadley. Them Boston fellows are good enough for marching in fair weather, but they ain't particular about spoil-

ing their uniforms on such a day as this. Ain't this comfortable, though?"

For a few moments after breakfast the men tipped back in their chairs, and lighting their pipes looked silently out at the storm, which was still raging.

"Going to be cold," said Shays, abruptly. "Guess it 'll be well to stay here a spell and let the men get rested and fed up a bit. Then we 'll move down into Middlesex. They 'll be expecting us there."

"Do you think, cap'n," said Stone, "that we can get on near Boston before they get word of our movements?"

"Brooks has been led into the trap along with the others," answered Shays, "and the field is clear. Once in Middlesex we can get all the men we want, and then we 'll have 'em. They 'll have to do pretty much as we say. What 's that yelling outside? Something 's happening."

They all jumped to their feet and rushed toward the door, Shays in advance of the others. He had just opened it when a man came running in out of breath.

"Quick, cap'n," he cried, without waiting to be questioned. "They 're on to us, and we must do something."

"Who 's on to us?" asked Shays, not realizing the man's full meaning.

"The militia. They 're coming up the road now. I saw 'em myself."

"You 're crazy, man," said Shays, doubtingly. "You 've mistaken somebody else for 'em. Where are they?"

"Over west by the New Salem road. I ain't made no mistake, cap'n. There 's more 'n a hundred of 'em on horseback, and they 're waiting for the others, who are coming up behind. There, hear 'em shouting! There go half our men down the road."

"Damnation!" said Shays, as he took his hat and sword and ran out onto the highway. "Stop, you rascals. Form your ranks there, ye sneaking cowards. What are ye running away for?"

It was no use. The news of the approaching army had spread through the village like wild-fire, and doors were slamming, and men were passing down the road, shouting and in panic. Some had not even waited to take their arms and hats, but, stricken with the contagion, rushed madly in the direction of Athol. Daniel Shays went about swearing, threatening, and striking, but in vain. On, on they went, and as the artillery was appearing through the snowdrifts over the brow of the hill,

the last of the stragglers were vanishing through the forest. With a volley of oaths, Shays mounted his horse, and realizing that he was forsaken by his troops, followed them in mad haste.

In the mean time General Lincoln's army was entering the town, and Colonel Haskell's advanced guard had succeeded in capturing many of the fugitives. When at last the main body under General Lincoln arrived, he at once gave orders to pursue and capture as many as possible, but not to fire upon them unless it should become absolutely necessary.

Jimmy and Abe had been, as usual, among the first to take the alarm, and were swept with the tide toward Athol. They had gone nearly two miles, when they heard the sound of approaching horses, and they tried to hasten forward. Soon came an order to halt, and the next moment the troops rode up and surrounded those of the insurgents who were in sight. A few of the leaders, including Shays himself, made some show of resistance, but at last they were captured and disarmed.

William Perry had joined the pursuit, for he wished to protect Ruth's brother, should he be among the fugitives. When he reached the valley between the hills where the captives were sur-

rounded by the troops, he looked about him anxiously in search of Jimmy, and as he did so he caught sight of Daniel Shays, disarmed, and between two lines of men with drawn pistols. The insurgent captain stood with his arms folded, scanning his captors with an apparently indifferent expression. Perry could not restrain his desire to speak to him, and riding forward he said, with a smile, —

"Good-morning, Captain Shays. Perhaps you don't remember me? I received your message from Captain Day, but unfortunately I could n't wait for you."

Shays looked at him, and an ugly expression came into the captain's eyes, but he did not answer.

"So you know the captain, do you?" said Russell, riding up beside Perry.

"Indeed I do, and we 've had several appointments which we 've been unable to keep, owing to circumstances. Holloa, there 's the boy I 'm looking for. I 'll be obliged to you, Russell, if you 'll use your influence to have this boy let off. I want to take him home. I 've been looking for you, Jimmy."

Young Brown looked gratefully up at the young man, but only smiled.

"Where 's your friend?"

"Over yonder," answered Jimmy, pointing over his shoulder.

"I see. Well, I'll try to take you both up to the farm. Ruth's expecting you."

A few moments later the troops started back toward Petersham with their prizes, and found General Lincoln awaiting them.

"How many have you caught?" asked the general, examining the prisoners severely.

"I should say about a hundred and fifty, sir," answered Haskell. "But we've got Shays, and that's worth the whole lot."

"Good, good, Haskell!" said Lincoln. "Bring him before me. I want to speak to him."

Shays was brought forward, and folding his arms looked at the general fearlessly.

"What have you to say for yourself, sir?" roared General Lincoln, eying the man savagely.

Shays still remained silent.

"Speak, you rascal," shouted the general, his round face reddening.

"I ain't got much to say, General Lincoln. I'm your prisoner of war."

"You're what?" snapped the general. "You're a captured criminal, you impertinent coxcomb. Will you mind what I say, and swear allegiance to government?"

"I suppose I 'll have to, general. You seem to have got things pretty much your own way."

"Silence, sir," said Lincoln, severely. "Limit yourself to a direct answer. Take him away and put him under careful guard. As to the privates, who are nothing but deluded fools, they may swear their allegiances, and go to their homes. We 'll keep the leaders and attend to them later."

"Well, Jimmy," said Perry, with some hesitation, as he was riding toward the farm with the two young men walking beside him, "you 've got out of this scrape at last, but I 've sad news for you, my boy. No one knew where to find you, so we could n't send for you."

Jimmy looked up quickly, and a startled expression came over his face.

"What is it, Mr. Perry? Is father sick?"

"Worse than that, my boy, he 's gone. He died about two weeks ago."

They had reached the brook where on several previous occasions William had stopped to water the mare. For a moment the boy stared at Perry in an inquiring manner. Then the whole truth came to him, and dropping on a stone, he put his head in his hands and gave way to his grief.

"What did he send me away for?" sobbed Jimmy. "I ought n't to have gone, Mr. Perry,

but father made me mind him, and I did n't dare to gainsay him. I was afeard he was sick when I left, and I 've tried to get back, but they would n't let us go."

"You 've done the best you could, Jimmy," said William, kindly. "Come along; Ruth 's waiting for you, and she 's something to tell you besides about your father. I 've promised not to say anything about it myself."

As they passed the smithy, cold and buried in snow, Jimmy's eyes filled again, and he stopped and looked at it.

"I guess I ain't never been much good to father," he said. "I 've tried to do, but I ain't been able."

Ruth had been watching for William all day, for she was not sure when he would return. It was Sunday, and she sat at the window of her room reading her Bible, from time to time looking down the road and over the mowing toward the hill beyond the blacksmith's shop. At last she dropped the book, and springing to her feet, put on her bonnet and shawl, and ran out down the road. A little later she was weeping on her brother's shoulder.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A FEW days after Jimmy's return, a little party stood in the parlor of the Petersham farm-house. They were William and Ruth Perry, who had just been married; Rev. Solomon Reed, Jimmy Brown, Abe Morse, and Sarah Barnes. The room was trimmed with evergreen boughs, and running pine from the grove. In the centre was a table, set out with cakes and ale, and two bottles of Madeira, which had been sent by Mr. Minot.

Round Ruth's fair neck hung a gold chain with a pearl pendant, her gift from Fisher Ames. In her hair she wore a marigold from a plant she had raised herself in the kitchen window. Altogether she looked sweet and happy in her simple new frock.

Abe and Sally had attended to everything for Ruth, and were now active in pouring out the wine, with which they were to drink the health of the bride and groom to the toast which Mr. Reed was about to give them.

"My dear children," said the minister, kindly, "I pledge you a long and happy life. You are both young, vigorous, and energetic. Live in the future as you have both done in the past, and the good God will cherish and bless you."

After they had drunk, Mr. Reed went up to Ruth, and taking both her hands, said with a smile, —

"You have chosen wisely, Ruth my dear, and I congratulate you from the bottom of my heart. Few women are favored with such a husband as you have, and you must never forget it."

Then turning to William and taking his hand, he went on, —

"And you, William, have a jewel, a priceless jewel. I have known her from childhood, and such devotion as hers is rarely met with. Bear this in mind."

"Mr. Reed," said William, "I have long since known what you have just told me, else I might not be here to-day. Six months ago I was a very lonely man, devoted to my profession, which I loved, and still love, but with few friends outside those who had been my classmates, and those with whom I had been brought in contact in the course of my business. I had known very few women, and no girls, for my parents died when I was but a boy, and I have worked for myself since

then. Although I was thus lonely, I was cheerful and happy and independent, until six months ago, when by accident I passed through here on my way from Springfield to Boston. Then I lost my independence, though for some reason I did not discover the fact myself as soon as did my friend, Fisher Ames. They say love is blind. I can assure you, sir, that mine was blind for many weeks, but it took very little to give it sight and understanding."

"And you are both very fortunate. There is only one thing I regret, William."

"What is that, sir?"

"That you 're going to take Ruth away from us. We 'd like to have you here amongst us."

"And I 'm sorry, too, Mr. Reed," answered William, sincerely; "but you will understand that I have to earn my living by my profession, and that all my clients and business associates are in and about Boston. We 're going to leave Jimmy in charge of the farm, though, and we 'll come here often, and make long visits."

"That 's right. Of course you could n't settle down in this out-of-the-way place. Our excitement of the past few days is unusual. We don't often have anything like it. In fact, we never had before."

"And I hope that nothing of the kind will happen again, Mr. Reed. I am glad they've got that hypocrite, Shays. I cannot imagine how so many have been willing to follow him."

"It's incredible, William, but you understand as well as any one the state of society in Massachusetts at the present time. There has been, and is, great distress among the people, and they have naturally been obliged to look about for leaders, both military and civil, for they are all tillers of the soil, and know little of such things. Shays, Day, and their likes saw an opportunity, and they were quick to grasp it for their own selfish advancement, and the people, being desperate, accepted them. I think the majority is now disillusionized as regards the leaders, although they are still bitter against government. But both sides have had a severe lesson, and will now profit by it."

"I hope so, and think so, Mr. Reed. We are certainly fortunate in the leaders of government, Governor Bowdoin, Fisher Ames, General Lincoln, and others without number. I have been a neutral through all this excitement, Mr. Reed, but I'm as loyal to government as any of these extremists."

"I know you are! I know you are, William,

and I honor you for the position you 've taken. But we 're talking of strange matters for your wedding day, and you 'll be soon leaving us."

"But we 'll be back again soon," said Ruth. "In a little while Jimmy 'll begin to get the farm ready for spring, and we shall come up in May, after the frost is out of the ground."

"I 'm glad of it, and the oftener you come, the better for us all."

Shortly after this Perry called to young Brown:

"You 're master of ceremonies, Jimmy: where 's our sleigh? Molly has n't been in a harness for over a year, and I don't know what she 'll think of it, but I don't want to make my bride ride."

"But I 'd like it so much, William," said Ruth, earnestly. "Can't I ride Molly, and can't we go the same way we went when you took me to Boston before?"

"Of course you can if you want to, Ruth dear; but I never imagined that you 'd prefer it. Put Ruth's saddle on Molly, Master Jimmy, and I 'll ride the old horse. Now we 'll get ready."

After Jimmy had gone over to the barn, Ruth went up-stairs with Sarah Barnes and got ready to start. She looked about her little room, and for a moment her eyes filled, as she caught sight of the different objects that had been so familiar

to her through all the years of joy and sorrow. The little Bible and book of poems were still on the table, and she lifted them tenderly, and then set them down again.

"I 'm going to leave everything just as it is in my room, Sarah," she said. "You 'll look in once in a while, and see that everything 's all right, won't you?"

"Of course I will, Ruth. Poor Jimmy won't be much of a housekeeper. I 'll look out for him, and the house."

"Thank you so much," said Ruth, drying her eyes. "I ought n't to cry on my wedding day, but so many things come back to me as I look about. I hope you 'll get a good husband, Sarah. You deserve one."

Sarah Barnes blushed and turned away. Then she came back toward Ruth.

"I — I was going to tell you, Ruth," she stammered. "I 'm a going to marry Abe. He asked me this morning in the kitchen when we were fixing things up."

Ruth laughed, and kissed the girl.

"I suspected it," she said. "I 'm glad, for Abe 's a good, kind boy. Now I 'm ready."

She went down-stairs, where she found the others waiting. The minister held up his hands in admiration.

"Well, well, Mrs. Perry," he said with a smile. "William, take good care of her," he went on, taking Perry one side. "Here comes Jimmy with the horses. God bless you both."

"God bless you, too, Mr. Reed," said William, warmly; "you 've been such a dear, kind friend to Ruth and hers in their troubles that I feel very grateful to you, sir."

"I could not have done less than I have," answered the minister, kindly. "Had I known of things sooner, I 'd have tried to do more, but I never realized how poorly the deacon was. You know that he was a man of few words, and who made few confidences, and I knew nothing of his troubles or his ill-health until shortly before he died. It was too bad, too bad."

The little party passed out through the side door, to where Jimmy was waiting for them with the horses. William Perry and his wife mounted, and with tender farewells, rode off over the pastures through Gerry and Templeton, on to Groton, Concord, and Boston.

Summer had come and gone, and Petersham was radiant in its brilliant autumn foliage. The lights and shadows over the hills and valleys within sight of the farm lent a charm and beauty to the

landscape which no place has in greater perfection. The golden-rod was waving in the gentle breeze which blew down the road from over the pastures toward Monadnock. It was a lovely October afternoon, and William and Ruth had come up from Boston to stay a few days with Jimmy, who, with Abe and his wife, was now living on the old Brown farm. It was more than five years since Daniel Shays had been captured by General Lincoln near Petersham village, and William and Ruth had come to feel like old married people, especially so when they looked down on the two fair-haired children, the little Isaac and the little Ruth.

These five years had changed Jimmy much, although a hundred could not have made him very bright. Yet he had matured and become of some use, and had succeeded in making the farm pay. Abe Morse had hired the smithy, and he too had become industrious, so that the little household, cared for as it was by the energetic Sarah, was neat and cheerful, and a pride and pleasure to both Ruth and William.

William and Jimmy were standing by the shed door talking, and Perry was tossing pieces of bread to two dogs, which were frolicking about him.

"Down, Castor! down, Pollux!" he said, as they jumped up against him and tried to take the bread from his hand. Jimmy began to laugh.

"Where did ye get them outlandish names, William? Carstor and Pullux! Why don't you call 'em something natural? How 'd Moses and Aaron do?"

Perry smiled.

"I call 'em Castor and Pollux, Jimmy, because they 're twins, and regular gods of victory. You ought to see 'em chasing a rabbit. You 'd understand then why I named them as I have."

"Are they any good for coon?" asked young Brown, with a show of interest.

"I don't know, I never tried 'em."

"Would you like to go out to-night? There 's lots of 'em about now, and it 's fine sport."

"Of course I would, Jimmy. What a bright chap you are to think about it."

"I 'll get Abe to go too; he knows all about 'em, and jest where to find 'em."

It was a dark night, as William, Abe, and Jimmy, followed by the two dogs, struck across the mowing, by the blacksmith shop, and on to the tannery. One carried a lantern, and the other two had their guns. When they reached the brook, Abe stopped them, and said, —

"Now I 'm going to take ye to a place where I ain't been for more 'n ten years. It 's down the brook, then into the woods. It ain't fur, but it 's hard walking, and we 'll have to go down the bed of the brook a piece. It 's near the old tumbled-down house they say 's haunted. You don't mind, do ye?"

"Well, I can't say that you 're very encouraging," said William, laughing. "But if Jimmy is n't afraid, I 'm not. How is it, Jimmy?"

"I ain't afeard, William. The house ain't haunted. There 's only a couple of queer-looking chaps that live there and never see anybody, and nobody ever goes there. Sam Barnes see 'em one day, so I guess they 're flesh and blood."

"Come along, then," said Abe. "Steady. There 's lots of rolling stones in the brook. Hold the lantern so 's we can all see, Jimmy."

Brown lighted the way, and the others followed with the dogs at their heels. When they had gone about half a mile, Abe led them up the steep bank into the thick woods, where they proceeded along the brook, but high above it.

They had gone but a few yards when one of the dogs began to growl, and the other soon followed suit. Abe put up his hand for them to halt, and whispered, —

"Be quiet, it must be the coons."

They waited a minute, and then went after the dogs, which were nosing the ground and rushing about excitedly. William was now in advance of the others, keeping near the dogs, when he suddenly stopped in amazement. He had come on the trunk of a tree protruding from the ground, and from it poured forth a thick mass of smoke.

"Jimmy! Abe!" he called quietly, "come here. What can this mean? Listen, I 'm sure I hear voices below."

He put his ear to the ground, and could hear distinctly the muffled sound of voices.

"This is strange," he whispered to the two young men. "See, the dogs are going down over the bank. Wait here a minute for me. I 'm going to follow them."

He crept noiselessly after the dogs, which before long stopped.

"Down, Castor! Down, Pollux! Quiet," said William, in an undertone. "Stay where you are."

The dogs obeyed at once, and William walked to an opening in the side of the bank and strained his ears. Two men were conversing earnestly, and he could hear every word they said, and his heart beat violently with suppressed excitement.

"Samuel," said one of the voices, "you have n't learned your business yet. Can't you make a better guinea than that? Do you think I can keep you if you don't mend your ways?"

"I 'm doing the best I can," whined the other voice.

"No, you ain't, Samuel. I 'll turn you over to the constable, if you don't do better. Blow the fire. It 's cold."

William drew a long breath and thought, —

"My heavens, am I losing my mind? If those are n't Jerry Piper and Samuel, I 'm crazy."

He crept silently up the bank again, and without a word about what he had heard, told the young men that he was tired, and walked home. The next morning he went to Worcester.

Three days after the interrupted coon-hunt, the haunted house in the woods near the brook was visited by the officers, and Jeremiah Piper and his faithful Samuel were arrested to answer the charge of counterfeiting. In the cave were found a set of tools and a furnace, and at the trial it appeared that Jerry had hoped to get the Brown farm for the purposes of their trade.

So ends this little story of Shays' Rebellion and its results. The most important to the country were the final federation of the States, and the

perfecting of the Constitution. But the most important to William Perry were the finding of his dear wife Ruth on the Petersham farm, and the conviction of the little villain who had tried to ruin them.

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